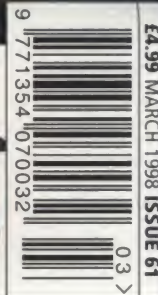


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EXCLUSIVE REVIEW! WARHAMMER: DARK OMEN



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WARHAMMER
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Final Fantasy VII

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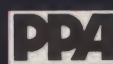
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Cruelty Zoo... an apology

IN LAST MONTH'S ISSUE OF PC ZONE, FEBRUARY 1998, page 120 carried a cartoon entitled 'Dr Helmut Werstler's Cruelty Zoo'. This was originally a satirical comment on animals being killed in video games, but references to particular games and game characters were removed in the editing process for legal reasons. The resultant feature hence became a gratuitous reference to children being involved in violence towards animals. At this point, the offending article should have been removed. An error of judgement led to its inclusion. The publishers of PC Zone would like to apologise unreservedly for any offence caused and offer reassurances that such a lapse will not occur again.

Jeremy Wells, Editor

CD ZONE

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

You'll need at least a Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.

Many of the programs are designed to run under Windows 95 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.

Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are Windows 95, DOS and 3D accelerator only.

Help!

CD trouble? HD playing up? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990

Any weekday between 9am and 4pm

CD-ROM HELP

Phone ABT on 01708 250250 or
pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk

Any weekday between 11am and 5pm
(Please DO NOT phone the PC Zone office
as your calls will NOT be answered)

If you are calling either helpline, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information ie system type, sound card, RAM etc, plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

No CD?

If you don't have the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HDs from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

CD Exchange (61), PC Zone, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ

Your details (please print clearly)

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Please make cheques payable to:

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CDs from previous issues are also available.

On the disc

This month we've packed in loads of the latest demos including a couple of super-smashing EXCLUSIVE titles, such as the latest release to be based on Games Workshop's *Warhammer* tabletop game *Dark Omen*. There's also an exclusive playable demo of *Plane Crazy* – which is soon to hit the arcades. Don't forget to check out Hotshots for the latest pix of the hottest games and all the latest upgrade patches and 3D card updates. If you're still having problems with the new-look browser don't forget to e-mail us at the address to the left. Just remember while you're playing the demos – we're hard at work on next month's disc.



WARHAMMER: DARK OMEN

(Electronic Arts)

EXCLUSIVE!



THIS EXCLUSIVE DEMO OF EA'S real-time strategy game shows how sequels should be done. It features one of the early missions from the full game where you must keep the undead army from taking over the centre of town. Under your command are crossbowmen, cavalry, infantry and a rather handy wizard. The enemy will attack from all directions, so make sure your cavalry don't get pulled out too far – you'll need them to support troops under attack.

Deploy your units within the white flags; remember your cannon can't move once the game is under way, so protect it well. You can set up movement and

firing orders before starting – but remember to ensure your troops are facing the enemy or they won't see them. You can also select units off-screen and attack the enemy without having to find them in the battle window first – a very useful feature.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

LMB	Select
RMB	Move screen
↑/↓	Zoom in/out
←/→	Rotate left/right
•/•	Change formation
TAB	Map
F1	Men

- 1 Deployment zone
- 2 Drag and drop units by their banner
- 3 Auto-deploy button
- 4 Select a unit during the game by clicking on its banner
- 5 Change unit facing
- 6 Stop!
- 7 Charge!
- 8 Shoot ranged weapons
- 9 Break off the attack
- 10 Hero button
- 11 Number of troops of the selected unit still alive
- 12 Select/cast spell
- 13 Banner of selected unit
- 14 Start the battle

PLANE CRAZY (Europress)

IF FLYING DOWN MEANDERING canyons seems a little reckless and therefore perfect material upon which to base a computer game, then just bear in mind that some people actually do this stuff for real, although they usually die horribly if they hit a wall. Of course you're perfectly safe in this time-limited demo – the only problem you'll have is trying not to play it time and time again.

Controls:

Keyboard/gamepad/joystick

- Directional control
- Increase/decrease throttle
- Stop power-up cycle/fire power-up
- Fire sonic cannon
- Quit to desktop



You can take gunnery and driving positions within your vehicles, pop up the hatch, and even breathe in the aroma of the napalm your air strike just dropped.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

- Chase views
- TC buttoned
- TC unbuttoned
- Gunner
- Driver
- IVIS map
- SABOT
- HEAT
- STAFF
- Jump to other tank
- Thermal imaging
- Polarity
- Map/GPS mode
- ID tags
- Platoon orders
- Mission stats
- Primary movement
- Secondary movement
- Speed select
- Fine control
- Align to gun
- Align to hull
- Fire
- Fire coax
- Auto-stabilisation
- Target hot threats
- Target all
- Target last attack
- Engine smoke
- Smoke grenade
- Air support
- Artillery
- Keyboard help



FROGGER (Hasbro)

It's the return of everyone's favourite wart infested amphibian (no, not Lemmy). The problem is, this frog can't swim and he's got to get across the river to find a mate with which to procreate. This new 3D update of the '80s road-crossing classic should have you spawning in your knickers – or not, as the case may be.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad

- Movement
- Super jump
- Rotate screen



ARMORED FIST 2 (NovaLogic)

NovaLogic's tank sim requires you to protect a local village from the violent advance of a division of rebel vehicles.



ULTIMATE RACE PRO

(MicroProse)

Get behind the wheel of the latest 3D arcade racer from developers Kalisto and try your hand at four laps of the training circuit. Network play for up to four players is available, as well as a choice of two cars from the full version of the game. A word of warning though: it gets dark very quickly, so don't forget to use your headlights.

Controls: Keyboard/steering wheel/joystick

- Steer
- Accelerate/brake
- Gear up/down
- View
- Radar
- Headlights
- Pause
- Display meter



FALCON 4.0

(MicroProse)

If this demo is anything to go by, it looks as though the *Falcon* series of games will probably outlast the real fighter on which they're based. Two instant action missions are on offer here: one where you must search out ground targets and another where you must scan for bogies. (It goes without saying that the old ones are always the best. Doesn't it?) Beware though – this is a serious game and it needs a pretty high-spec machine to run it. Maybe it's time to upgrade to a Pentium II now!

Controls: Joystick/mouse/keyboard

SIMULATION KEYS:

- Increase/decrease thrust
- Full afterburner
- Wheel brakes
- Eject

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- A** Autopilot
- G** Gear
- H** Toggle pitch ladder
- CTRL H** Toggle HUD
- Z** Flares
- X** Chaff
- B** Toggle speed brakes
- SHIFT B** Open speed brakes
- CTRL B** Close speed brakes
- N** Set previous steerpoint
- M** Set next steerpoint

WEAPON KEYS:

- BACKSPACE** Cycle AG weapons
- ↓** Fire control computer sub-modes
- SHIFT ↓** Fire control computer master modes
- ENTER** Cycle AA weapons
- ALT J** Jettison selected weapon
- D** Toggle dogfight mode
- V** Toggle MRM mode
- []** Fire weapon
- I** Cycle left MFD
- J** Cycle right MFD
- .** Toggle SMS page or EO for maverick

RADAR KEYS:

- F1** Cycle radar AA modes
- F2** Cycle radar AG modes
- F3** Decrease radar range
- SHIFT F3** Decrease radar gain
- F4** Increase radar range
- SHIFT F4** Increase radar gain
- F5** Tilt radar antenna down
- F6** Centre radar antenna
- F7** Tilt radar antenna up
- F8** Cycle radar sub-modes
- SHIFT F8** Change radar scans

- F9** Ground map radar field of view
- S** Lock previous target in Easy and Simplified radar modes
- []** Lock next target in Easy and Simplified radar modes
- /** Lock target on nose in Easy and Simplified radar modes
- ↑ ↓ ← →** Move cursor keypad **O** Designate target keypad **L** Radar return to search

VIEW KEYS:

- []** No cockpit view
- 1** Front cockpit view
- 2** Virtual cockpit view
- 3** Padlock view
- 4** Extended FOV view
- 5** Chase view
- 6** External view
- Y** Toggle narrow FOV
- U** Lower-left cockpit
- I** Lower cockpit
- O** Lower-right cockpit
- INS** 10 o'clock view
- HOME** 50/50 view
- SHIFT HOME** HUD view
- keypad **7/1** Zoom in/out
- keypad **2 4 6 8** Pan view
- keypad **← →** Track planes
- keypad **3** Glance backwards
- keypad **ENTER** Glance forwards

OTHER KEYS:

- SHIFT Q** AWACS command
- SHIFT S** Tanker command
- PRINT SCREEN** Screenshot
- P** Pause
- CTRL L** Toggle labels



BALLS OF STEEL

(GT Interactive)

This demo version of the *Duke Nukem*-inspired pinball game starts to lose features the more you play it; after about 60 games it won't run at all (maybe so that you buy the full game).

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

- F1** Key assignments
- RETURN** Fire the ball
- CTRL (left/right)** Flippers (left and right)
- []** Nudge up
- Z** Nudge left
- /** Nudge right
- P** Pause/report
- F2** Cycle the table view
- F3** Toggle ball and flipper shadows
- F4** Control scroll speed
- F5/F6** FX volume up/down
- F7/F8** Music volume up/down
- F9** Single-screen detail
- F10** Dot panel size
- F11** Dot panel type
- F12** Voice effects (on/off)



F/A-18 KOREA

(Empire Interactive)

You really need two keyboards and an extra pair of hands to play Empire's latest flight sim. Check out the readme file to find more key commands.

Controls: Joystick/mouse/keyboard

AIRCRAFT:

- Keypad **4/6** Aileron left/right
- Keypad **5/8** Elevator up/down
- []** Rudder left
- /** Rudder centre
- []** Rudder right
- ← →** Increase/decrease thrust
- BACKSPACE** Afterburner
- []** Speed/wheel brakes
- G** Gear

- F** Flaps
- H** Hook
- SHIFT D** Dump fuel
- SHIFT F** Refuel
- SHIFT S** Service (refuel/rearm)
- SHIFT E** Eject
- D** Damage display
- E** Engine display

NAVIGATION:

- A** Autopilot toggle
- SHIFT A** Autopilot mode cycle
- W** Waypoint cycle
- T** TACAN cycle
- L** ILS toggle
- M** Moving map/scale
- N** Navigation/HSI scale

RADAR:

- R** AA/AG radar toggle
- Q** Radar sub-mode cycle
- B** Radar standby
- I** IFF interrogate
- TAB / SHIFT TAB** Range decrease/increase
- SHIFT R** ACM cycle
- SHIFT Q** AACQ toggle
- CTRL R** Silent mode

TARGET SELECTION:

- SHIFT T ↑ ↓ ← →** TDC up/down/left/right
- []** Designate/cycle
- SHIFT []** Undesignate/TDC stow

WEAPONS:

- S** Store display
- I** Cycle AA weapons
- I** Cycle AG weapons
- SHIFT I** CCIP/auto-toggle
- J** Jettison station select
- .** Release flare
- .** Release chaff
- C** ECM toggle
- ENTER** Designate/release

HARM:

- U** HARM display
- CTRL []** Target cycle

VIEWS:

- 1** Cockpit
- 2** Cockpit look down
- 3** External
- 4** SA/padlock
- 5** Radar/E-O target
- 6** Ground/tower
- 7** Weapon external
- 8** Weapon eye

SIMULATION ENVIRONMENT:

- SHIFT ESC** Exit flight
- CTRL F** Fast-time toggle
- ESC** Reset current mission
- P** Pause flight

HD ZONE

QUIVER (ESD)

Doom may have been resting in the catacombs of gaming history for a long time, but some people just can't help but resurrect its classic 3D action. This month's floppy bits features three levels of alien blasting which we've all seen before but don't mind seeing again – well, some of us anyway.

Controls: Keyboard/mouse

- 1-8** Guns
- ↑ ↓ ← →** Movement
- ESC** Main menu
- ↑** Look up
- ↓** Look down
- HOME** Centre view
- TAB / F9** Auto-map
- F1** Help
- F2** Save game



- F3** Load game
- F4** Volume control
- F11** Monitor brightness
- F12** Screen capture (PCX)
- CTRL / ENTER** Fire
- ALT** Strafe
- SHIFT** Run
- ↑ ↓** Jump
- []** Open doors/trigger switches
- ← →** Increase screen size
- Keypad **-** Shrink screen

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IF YOU

THOUGHT

YOU KNEW

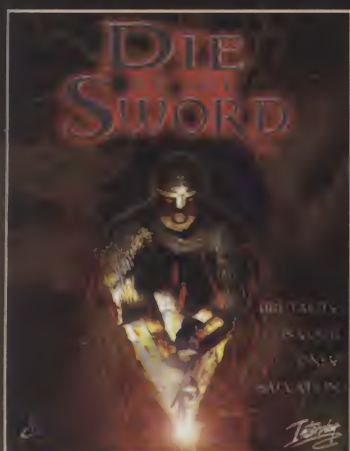
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THE JOURNEYMAN PROJECT 3: LEGACY OF TIME (Red Orb Entertainment)

Save the world from destruction. No problem – it's all in a day's work for the time-travelling investigator Gage Blackwood. Your mission in this demo is to explore Atlantis to make a gold medallion (and then wear it outside an unfeasibly loud shirt unbuttoned to the waist). To leave the demo, move the cursor to the top of the screen. (And check out our review on page 76.)

Controls: Mouse

PROJECT ARIOS (Ocean)

Project Arios is a real-time strategy game – it's a bit like *C&C*, only you have to manage your finances as well as your troops. Interactive Magic published the game in the US under the name *War Inc*. Apparently *War Inc* sounds a bit like 'wank', so they changed it to *Project Arios* – which doesn't sound at all like 'arse'.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

RMB	Select units
LMB	Move/fight
G	Gun lock
A	Auto-weapon toggle
V	Toggle voices
B	Snap to last battle
O	Options
TAB	Toggle toolbar



FINAL LIBERATION

(SSI/Mindscape)

The village of Hothgar's Stance is occupied by orks and it's up to you to flush them out – yep, it's another *Warhammer* game, but this one's turn-based and set in the far future. The game icons are pretty self-explanatory. Incidentally, why don't you go down the docks and shout "I'm a game icon" to all the sailors, just for a laugh.

Controls: Mouse

ARSENAL

(Tactical Software)

This has about as much in common with the football club as Spurs has with success; and as a *C&C* clone it's not the most attractive or innovative we've ever seen either. But its French programmers obviously couldn't care less about originality or fab graphics – and why should they? Anyway, *Arsenal* has more than a few accidental laughs, especially in the accompanying readme file: 'Taste our artificial intelligence, I think it will give you hard time.' Bless.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

ESC	Options
F1	Help
F2	Save
F3	Load
F9-F11	Change screen resolution
[]	Mini-map redraw



MADDEN NFL '98

(EA Sports)

American football: you either love it or hate it. If you do you're probably a weak beer and beef eatin' American – even if you don't, you still might like to try your hand at their favourite sport. This five-minute demo is between the Green Bay Packers and the New England Patriots – and it's a lot more fun than cricket.

Controls:

Mouse/keyboard/gamepad

ACTION CONTROL:

ESC	Pause game (only during playcalling)
W X A D	Move player/take control of highlighted player
T	Dive
I	Jump
Z	Call timeout before the snap

OFFENCE: Before the snap

T with W X A D	Call audible
W X A D	Start player in motion
Y	Snap the ball rushing
Y	Explode forward
U	Spin
I	Dive for extra yardage

PASSING:

Y	Call up passing symbols
T Y U	Pass to receiver with appropriate control symbol

RECEIVING:

Y	Control receiver closest to ball
T	Dive for low pass
I	Jump and raise hands for high pass

DEFENCE: Before the snap

T with W X A D	Call audible
Y	Control a different player

Y	After the snap
Y	Control defender closest to the ball
T	Dive to tackle
I	Jump to block or catch pass

KICKING:	Kick off/punt/field goal/extra point
T	Toggle normal/onside kick audible (kick off only)
Y	Start kick meter/kick ball
W X A D	Aim kick left/right

RECEIVE KICK:

T	Toggle normal/onside kick audible (kick off return only)
W X A D	Control kick receiver

UPRISING! (3DO/Ubi Soft)

OK, so we've run this genre-busting demo before – but not in glorious 3Dfx-arama. Ubi Soft's 3D action strategy game features three tutorial missions and one full combat mission from the full game. Guide your wraith tank against the enemy bases with the help of infantry and tanks (plus a stack of Doritos by your side, natch).

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

T/L	Wraith forward/back
←/→	Wraith strafe left/right
Mouse	Controls view (wraith turret)

LMB

RMB	Primary weapon
F1	Secondary weapon
F2	Deploys infantry
F3	Deploys tank
F4	Deploys AAV gunship
F5	Deploys bomber
F6	Deploys gun turret
F7	Deploys SAM site
F9	Killer satellite strike
F11	Calls in Citadel
F11	Toggles wraith HUD

F12

	Citadel/cycles through multiple Citadels
O	Satellite map
BACKSPACE	Recalls deployed unit (unit must be targeted)
ENTER	Secondary weapon menu
SHIFT	Deploy unit menu
F	Fix wraith



SANATORIUM (ASC Games)

You wake up in a dark dank room, disturbed from a troubled sleep, a distant thudding echoing through the wailing walls. You try once more to remember who you are or how you got to be in this place.

Staggering out to the dark balcony you see a man on the next floor cracking his head against the wall, his face already seeping like a cracked raw egg. You know just one thing: you have to escape (*cue scary music...*).

Controls: Mouse

Q	Quit
---	------

SPACE EMPIRES III

(Malfador Machinations)

Do you like reams of figures and tiny but functional graphics? Tired of Microsoft Excel? Why not try *Space Empires III*, a shareware strategy game where you get to guide your people to total galactic domination by designing ships, researching technology and politically manipulating your friends and enemies. Like *Stars*, *Star Empires III* is massive in scope and sure to keep many people occupied for longer than they should be legally entitled.

Controls: Mouse

PATCHES

If the latest game you've bought is teeming with bugs, or your old games require a 3D overhaul, you'll find all the latest upgrades and 3D accelerator patches in the /patches directory on your user-friendly CD Zone. Just run the self-extracting files, making sure you specify the correct directory where necessary – gaming nirvana is only a double-click away. Included this month: *Quake II* 3.10 bug fix, *Starfleet Academy* update and spades more besides.



Wireplay

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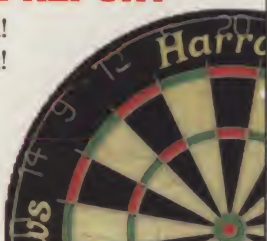
MULTIPLAY **TOTAL ANNIHILATION**

BULLETIN

SPECIAL REPORT

What a sport!
What a sport!

PAGE 18



YOU READ IT HERE FIRST

The last bit of the entire
mag – written
at breakneck
speed...
PAGE 22

**YOU READ
IT HERE
FIRST**

More missions for ADF

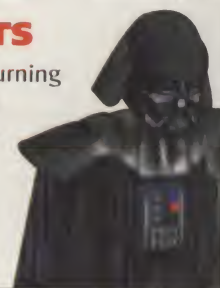
It seems that setting a flight sim in Egypt mere weeks after the Luxor massacre wasn't enough, as DID are now planning

DATAPAD

HOT SHOTS

Programmers burning the midnight oil should see their games here.

PAGE 24



Carmageddon II: Carpocalypse Now



Because we're brilliant and that, **PC Zone** has managed to glean some remarkable information regarding SCI's forthcoming sequel to last year's immensely popular *Carmageddon*.

As widely predicted, *Carmageddon II* will be completely and utterly 3D accelerator-friendly, with the action spewing across the screen in 16 million colours at a crisp 640x480 resolution. That much we could have guessed. And now for the rest...

First things first: them pedestrians. The blocky digitised sprites are to be replaced by sleek new 3D polygon-based equivalents. Aside from making them look far cooler, this fundamental change in their physical makeup lends itself nicely to plenty of charming new 'game features', such as individual body parts being torn off and sent spinning through the air, spewing congealed blood all over the grinning face of the player. It also means that the



Carmageddon II's cars are being built piece by piece. Realism, as well as gore, is high priority.

collisions benefit from greater realism, so if you reverse into someone at 60mph, for instance, you can be sure that as their head ricochets off your boot, and their flailing carcass wraps itself round a nearby lamppost, it'll look just like the real thing. Aside from collision-based death, the peds will also have 'human torch syndrome' to deal with; some cars will be capable of setting people on fire with their jet engines. They'll also be 'cleverer' for greater



(Left) Early conceptual render. (Top) *Carmageddon II's* new cars currently looking good. (Above) The infamous sense of humour remains intact.

satisfaction when you manage to mow one down.

But that's not all. The entire environment is set to be far more authentic. Aside from the introduction of 'ordinary' traffic (that is, cars not taking part in the race), there'll be working traffic lights, pedestrian crossings and emergency service vehicles that drive around trying to mop up the mess you've made. There'll be more 'destroyable' bits too; players will be able to smash their way through windows, shatter billboards and generally break loads of stuff.

Police, Camera, Action fans can rejoice at the news that action replays may be saved to the hard drive for future enjoyment, while multi-player enthusiasts will be treated to lots of new small, tight deathmatch levels (which, spookily, is exactly what we asked for in issue 60's *Splat Pack* review), where up to 16 quiet angry loners may vent their anger on one another. And it will all run over the Internet.

In other words, *Carmageddon II* is going to be an unholy nightmare of ghoulish obscenity that will no doubt appal and dismay reasonable people everywhere. We for one can't wait. But we'll have to – it isn't released until October. **Z**



to stir up another hornet's nest of public opinion by releasing the *Red Sea Operations* mission pack for F-22 ADF, just in time for a sequel to *The Mother Of All Battles: Gulf War II* – This Time It's Personal.

While fans of *The Mother Of All Flight Sims* continue to wait patiently for the *Total Air War* upgrade/add-on/bug fix, they can at least take solace from the fact that DID won't be dividing their own workforce

between the two projects. *Red Sea Operations* has been designed exclusively by professional prop-heads Sim-Tech and will contain over 30 new self-contained missions, split over three new tours.

There are also new training missions and a tour devoted to the AWACS aircraft. More info can be gleaned from www.did.com or www.sim-tech.co.uk. *Red Sea Operations* should be out by the time you read this.



Spice up your life



Before Westwood Studios made the gorgeous love-object that is *Command & Conquer*, there was *Dune 2*. People still go all misty-eyed when they remember its tense, addictive gameplay, its strategic challenge, full pouting lips and firm bosom. Their index fingers still twitch in their sleep as they frantically fight off the advances of the other two tribes and collect the most Spice.

Now Westwood have decided to give it an overhaul and get those people hot and moist all over again: they're busy making *Dune 2000*. What they're doing is updating the game to incorporate all the technological advances that have come about since it was first released in 1992. There'll be C&C-style drag-and-click selection of multiple units; improved AI; updated 16-bit graphics and new FMV footage; and – most importantly – Internet two-player facilities and multi-player levels for up to eight players over a LAN. There'll be 27 missions to get your single-player teeth into as well. All Spice boys should look for a late summer release. **Z**

Jules Rimet still gleaming...

The official England game for France '98 is nearing completion and looks set to meet its scheduled release in late April. Entitled *Three Lions*, in deference to the trio of big cats that adorn the England shirt, the game is being developed by Z-Axis and will be published by BMG Interactive.

It will feature over 50 international teams from the past and present, including such classic sides as England '66 and Brazil '70. In an original twist, commentary has been forsaken in favour of players actually talking to each other, as well as berating the referee,

which could be interesting. Gordon Bellamy is the director of *Three Lions*, and he is talking it up large style: "We went back to source – real football. I have played it all my life, and I wanted to make a game that feels like you are actually playing a game with your favourite players, rather than just watching it on TV." And fair play to him, we say. **Z**



It's an Outrage



The *Descent* series makes a welcome return with a third instalment simply entitled *Outrage*.

The third instalment of everyone's favourite airborne twisty-turny tunnel 'em up has been scheduled for a late 1998 release. Strange things are afoot at developers Parallax, who have split into two groups, one to work on *Descent FreeSpace*: *The Great War* while the other concentrates their efforts on *Descent 3* proper. The latter party have since been renamed Outrage, and they are using an entirely new engine. The game itself promises to be much of the same, albeit with a shedload of new features. Many of the weapons from the original will make a reappearance, but all the objects will now be polygonal. Which is nice. **Z**



Lots of empty space to fly around in – again. *Descent 3* will have to beat *Forsaken* to make any kind of impact.



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excelled itself.' **91%**

PC FORMAT

'Thrilling. Stylish. Awesome...
A truly remarkable game.' **94%**

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STUDIOS

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9/10

**'Gorgeous. Stunning. Gobsmacking.
Amazing. Incredible.'**

9/10

PC REVIEW



**PC CD GAME OF THE YEAR 2019.
IN STORE NOW.**

Every Ultima on one CD-ROM

Electronic Arts have taken the not unwise decision to release the entire *Ultima* series of adventures in one compilation pack, due in

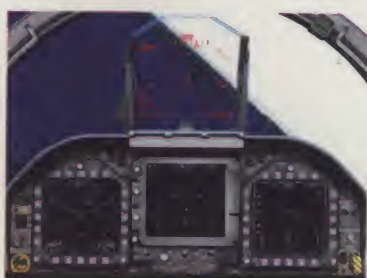
time for February. Starting with the original *Ultima* (released for the Commodore 64 way back in 1980) all the way up to the ambitious but flawed eighth episode, players can relive Richard Garriot's hugely captivating series all

over again thanks to the wonders of 'porting' and 'emulation'. Running under Windows 95, the games will run as originally intended, and as the pack comes with full documentation, expect one very weighty manual indeed.



DATA PRO

It's a kind of I-Magic!



(Top) Hex-based shenanigans in *Semper Fi*. (Above) That 'Carrier' game thing.

Those crazy funsters over at Interactive Magic have announced details of four more simtastic games, details of which we now lovingly bring you...

"Anybody fancy a quick game of *F/A-18E - Carrier Striker Fighter*?" doesn't quite have the same ring to it as "*Quake*, anyone?". But that's nevertheless the name of their new flight sim which is expected in June, replete with planes and everything.

More airborne insanity is on the cards with *Semper Fi*, inspired by the heroics of the US Marine Corps. It will contain 15 battles based on hypothetical situations in the Middle East, Cuba, Korea, Bosnia and the Mediterranean.

This spring should see the release of *Great Battles Of Caesar*, the third and final instalment in the series which previously featured the sizeable rucks of Alexander and Hannibal. Caesar's skirmishes will embrace every major battle during the Roman Civil War, and historians will no doubt be pleased to learn that it'll be kicking off at unpronounceable locations like Vercellae, Chaeronea, Dyrrhachium, Pharsalus, Ruspina, Thapsus and Munda.

Finally, come April you'll be presented with a stunning opportunity to run your own business courtesy of the optimistically titled *Industry Giant*. Open factories! Develop transport networks! Set your own prices! Exploit new technologies! Hours of fun for all the family... 2



(Above) Become an *Industry Giant* and pollute the planet, courtesy of I-Magic. (Above right) Life during Caesar's reign must've been a barrel of laughs.



More missions for Quake II

Redneck Rampage people team up with ID Software on the first official mission pack for *Quake II*.



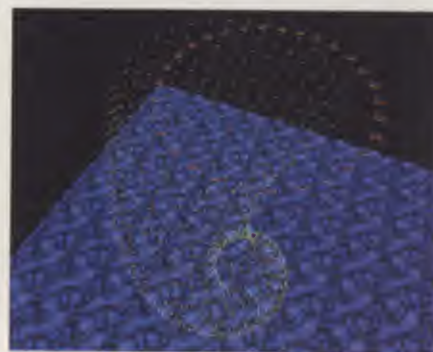
Activision have gone mission pack crazy this month, what with the announcement that *Quake II* is to get its first (and probably not its last) expansion pack entitled *The Reckoning. Dark Reign* will also be benefiting from the same treatment (see p17).

Under the watchful gaze of iD Software, Xatrix Entertainment (the people responsible for bringing us the hilarious *Redneck Rampage*) have been doing the business on *Quake II* and have come up with three all-new campaigns which send the player out as part of an elite combat unit to destroy a secret alien base. As well as new aliens, three weapons have been added including a particle shotgun™ and an energy trap™ (the latter device transforming victims into 'food cubes' - whatever they are). Oh, and there'll be some decent multi-player levels in there too (Thank heavens for that - Ed). 2

Pulls me down so quietly

You are about to step into a hitherto uncharted territory of the PC gaming world... This, we believe, is the long-overdue introduction of a new movement in gaming history entitled 'meditation gaming'. The game is to be called *Gravity*, and those who have seen it describe it as a "simple, peaceful first-person perspective, non-violent freefall game". It contains no weapons, no enemies, no nuffink. In fact, it all looks quite, er, bare in there.

Developers Seven Shades (Nice name - Ed) are confident that this new kind of sedate gaming will catch on, and are hoping that *Gravity* will revolutionise the way in which we play our games in the future. So what'll be, *Gravity* or *Carmageddon II*? Tough choice. 2



Add-on for Dark Reign is announced

Activision's C&C beater, *Dark Reign*, is to get the mission pack treatment with

the release of *Rise Of The Shadowhand*. Over a dozen new units are promised along with more than 18 single-player missions. With new multi-player maps and two new armies, players will also

be able to play co-operatively with AI-controlled armies. New features include road building (which facilitates movement) and marsh-creating (which doesn't). Some of the best player-


created levels will also be squeezed onto this add-on disc, the release of which is scheduled for March. For gorier details, why not point your browser at www.activision.com.



Motorcycle Emptiness


Debut game from Interactive Entertainment looking good.

Ten grand doesn't go far these days, but with that amount of money in your arse pocket you could treat yourself to a top of the range Castrol Honda Superbike, its 750ccs delivering an illegal top speed of 200mph. Alternatively, poor boy, 35 nicker will buy you a copy of *Castrol Superbike World Champions*, simultaneously dispensing with the need for leather trousers and effectively reducing the risk of leaving chunks of skin and flesh on the highway.

Published by newcomers Interactive Entertainment, the game has been officially licensed and developed with technical assistance from the Castrol Honda team. Putting the player astride a Honda RC45, the action takes place all over the world, including Britain, Greece, America, Japan and Thailand, realm of the lady-boys. The Isle Of Man is represented too, home of the annual carnage that is the Manx TT. So, on 9 April: think once, think twice, think BIKE! 



Mother Krusher

Krush, Kill 'N' Destroy, that fine real-time strategy game from Beam Software released some time last year, is due to make a comeback some time soon. In April actually, to be precise. Again, Electronic Arts are doing the publishing honours, and again the RRP will be £39.99. What has changed though, is much of the game itself. Forty years after its first outing, *KKND 2: Kollateral Damage* sees the return of The Survivors and The Mutants, but in a more evolved form. What this translates into is loads more weapons, loads more enemies, loads more destruction. Which is what this game is about, after all. *KKND* fans will be pleased to know that 45 single-player missions are planned, as well as true-sight fog of war, eight-player link-up, a unit editor and 20 multi-player maps. 



If you're going to draw a line in the sand...

Reah to take on Riven

Calling itself a cross between *Atlantis* and *Riven* (both of which we slated), Project Two are hoping that their new

title *Reah* will become the adventure game of 1998. At least things seem to be on the up in the 'pre-rendered 3D bore 'em up' genre though, as Polish developers LK Avalon are claiming a

specialised 3D graphics engine that flicks screens instantaneously. *Reah* has a 'stuck in an alternative reality' plot, multiple endings and non-linear story development. In short, it could be what

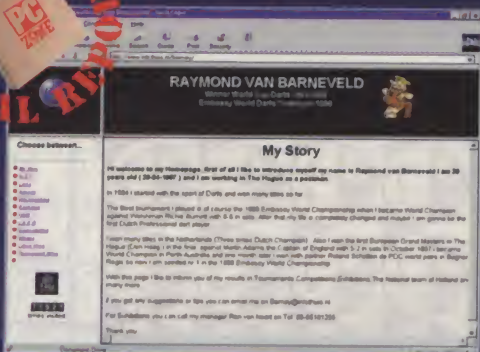
Riven should have been – half-decent. The CD is released in April, followed by an enhanced DVD-ROM version soon after. Check out Project Two's website at www.project2.com for more info.

DATA PAD

Let's play darts!

Steve Hill tracks a sponsored sporting legend.

ZONE
SPECIAL REPORT



Barney's site 'check out' and great soundbites included.

The more discerning readers among you will have eased yourselves into the New Year with a large helping of televised darts, effectively postponing 1998 until the completion of the Embassy World Championship. Regular viewers cannot help but have noticed number one seed Raymond van Barneveld, not just because he's a big lad, but because throughout the tournament the Dutchman sported a shirt with the distinctive *PC Zone* logo emblazoned on his right breast. Now to do with us, we must confess, but the work of our sister magazine, *PC Zone Benelux*, as the more eagle-eyed will have already ascertained.

So, just how did this strange course of events come about? Well, our continental colleagues reliably inform us that Barney's manager is an avid gamesplayer and that he approached them with a view to securing some sponsorship. The opening gambit was in the region of 2000 pies, to which *PC Zone Benelux* politely asked him to leave. Some weeks later he came back with a revised figure of 50 pies and a Mars bar, which they gladly accepted.

They certainly picked a winner, as Raymond went on to lift the title in a thrilling final against wispy-tached Welshman Richie Burnett. The unassuming 30-year-old postman then fell to his knees, exhausted and clearly emotional, weeping like a girl and tearing the *PC Zone* shirt from his back to reveal a particularly stylish vest that nicely complemented his pioneering use of jewellery. What a sport!

With this in mind, we are now laying down a challenge for developers to create the definitive darts game while simultaneously pushing for the sport's inclusion in the Olympics (hopefully as a replacement for ballroom dancing).

Surely it can only be a matter of time before we see Raymond van Barneveld's *Pro Darts*, *Actua Darts* or *Sid Waddell's Arrows 98...*



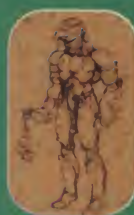
Unfinished business for KIXX

Eidos Interactive's budget range is to undergo a makeover. The existing cheapo brand – the long-standing KIXX label – is to have its prices slashed to the very marrow, down to a mere £4.99. More money for beer and crisps, then. Or whatever. This price drop will be accompanied by a widening of available outlets, so you'll soon find KIXX games lurking in supermarkets and petrol stations. Not that there's any reason for them to be there in the first place, but hey – it's another small step



that'll help put those pesky independent retailers out of business, right Satan? On a brighter note, since KIXX is now a cut-price range, Eidos have craftily created a new mid-price range to replace it – the Premier Collection. Jesus. Some people. Anyway, its line-up includes some bona fide bargains such as *Tomb Raider I* (with a previously unreleased add-on called *Unfinished Business*) for £14.99, and *Duke Nukem 3D*, *Championship Manager 97/98*, *Blood* and *Under A Killing Moon* all clocking in at £12.99. Yum.

What's that perfume called?



The current trend for games developed without a publisher continues with 8th Wonder's *Drachen Zor*. It follows the story of the Emperor of Drakkor's open invitation for warriors to fight for the title of 'Warlord of the Dragon Gate' in a full-on 3D fighting environment powered by the new real-time rendered 'V-Engine' – examples of which can be found at www.8wonder.com.

With V-Engine, 8th Wonder are hoping to create a 'real organic' look, and judging by first impressions gleaned from their site, it all looks very professional indeed. How it plays though is another matter, and with no sign of a publisher as yet, we may yet see legions of lonely Goths drinking snakebite in crematoriums around the country.



It's called Drakkar Noir, in case you were wondering.



Jack's Off

Once upon a time – or three years ago to be more precise – there was a 2D platform game featuring a character called Jazz Jackrabbit (although given the rabbit's legendary reputation, the name Jiz might have been more appropriate). It was voted, it says here, PC Arcade Game Of The Year in the

US – probably by readers of *Big-Eared Herbivorous Mammal Lovers Monthly*. Whatever, it looks like he's about to make a comeback in another thrilling adventure. And, as the Project Two press release boldly states: "While nearly every other platform hero has been given the 3D treatment in the past year, Epic has decided not to take Jazz into the third dimension." Cutting edge, then. Anyway, who knows, it might still be fun – we'll find out in a full review next issue.



We gather it's good, then?

Running around chasing imaginary demons may not be everyone's favourite pastime just now, but come the summer

there's every chance it could be. Developers Future Endeavours seem confident that *The Gatherer*, their first/third-person perspective time-travelling adventure, will be a *Tomb*

Raider II beater. And oddly enough, it looks like they might have a point... Five multi-levelled worlds should give the player enough room to wreak mayhem, not to mention the fairly


impressive list of more than 40 weapons and 70 real-time characters. It also has an instant replay for any really exciting moments, and multi-play options. If all goes to plan, it will be out this summer.



Those meddling kids

Fire up the campervan and get the gang together for this gruesome arcade adventure!

Looking like something of a cross between *Scooby Doo* and *Tomb Raider*, Gee Whiz Entertainment's forthcoming *Gruesome Castle* wholeheartedly embraces the 3Dfx revolution in its own unique cartoon manner. Using vibrantly coloured polygonal environments and fully controllable 3D characters, the development house is promising gameplay that "combines the 3D freedom of Nintendo's *Mario*, with the classic adventure gameplay of LucasArts' *Monkey Island* series."

Gruesome Castle follows the exploits of Jake and Anna King, and their pals Skip, Wendy, Brad and dino-monkey Jeepers. Together they form the Gee Whiz! Mystery Club – an adventurous gang of teens who travel the world solving mysteries and generally meddling in other people's business. Sounds like it could be a lot of fun – read more about it at www.geewhiz.com.au. 



Frosty new Hexen II add-on




Hexen II Mission Pack:

Portal Of Praevus is Raven Software's first fully-endorsed *Hexen II* add-on for their smash hit *Quake*-engineed hack 'em up and is to be released by Activision during February.

Initially returning players to the land of Blackmarsh, *Portal*

Of Praevus extends the *Hexen II* story over and through the icy climes of Tibet as the player attempts to stop an evil wizard resurrecting the ominously-titled *Serpent Riders*.

There'll be 15 new levels to explore, plus three new enemies and an all-new player character class called 'Demoness'. Expect lots of running, jumping, ducking and diving through intricate levels, tunnels, ice caverns, catacombs and oh, an ancient Buddhist Temple as well. A tweaked physics model also allows for realistic snow and wind effects. Players may also want to leave a window open and turn the heating off for further realism.

Check out www.hexen2.com or www.activision.com for further details. 



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Cut out and keep Quake

Instead of having its own range of action figures (à la Duke Nukem), Quake is to have a marine model kit made of, erm... cardboard. The 10-inch figure



will come on three (count 'em) sheets of card with bundled assembly instructions (coo). Under licence from iD Software, developers Cybermodels hope that their wipe-clean 'unique concept' will appeal not only to gamers but to avid Blue Peter

fans as well. The Quake Marine Card Model Kit is available for £4.99 (excl p&p) from Cybermodels, PO Box 903, Harrow HA1 4XY. For further details, telephone 0181 427 0818 or visit www.cix.co.uk/darren-pattenden/cyber.htm

DATA PAD

Show us your monkey



Game developers Blam! are putting the finishing touches to their new adventure game *Monkey Hero*.

This 3D adventure in the cutesy mould of Nintendo's *Legend Of Zelda III* is an epic story based loosely on the Chinese folk tale *The Legend Of Monkey King*. The game follows the amusing adventures of a young hero named Monkey. His quest? Simple: restore harmony to the Three Worlds by finding eight missing chapters of the Magic Story Book.

There are 16 gadget-packed dungeons, 45

different enemies and 14 special bosses to overcome. Blam! have promised lots of *Zelda*-esque antics, and you'll need to use grappling hooks, power gloves and other special items to help win through in the game. The programmers clearly like the aforementioned Nintendo classic quite a bit, and if *Monkey Hero* is anywhere near as good as *Zelda* we should all be in for a massive treat.

Monkey Hero is due out in the summer through BMG Interactive – make sure you're ready to give it a blummen good spanking. **Z**



Monkey Hero confronts an icy 'purple people eater' in a spectacular end-of-level showdown – *Zelda* style.

Fly Virgin

The military flight sim sack looks set to burst with the pending arrival of *F-16 Aggressor* from Virgin Interactive. Developed by GSI, it will accurately replicate the F-16

Falcon flight model, and certain military-only features apparently had to be removed before the game was approved (*You mean the bugs? – Ed*). The beautiful African scenery of Madagascar, The Rift Valley, Morocco and Ethiopia will be featured over the course of 40 varied missions, enabling players to destroy buildings, roads, planes, boats, helicopters, tanks, trains, animals and people, in approximately that order of importance. *F-16 Aggressor* will take to the skies this spring. **Z**



Strategic Park: The Lost World



Dawn Of War, on its way from VIE this summer, is a strategy game set entirely in Neanderthal times, although thanks to artistic licence it will include dinosaurs. You take control of a tribe, battle other tribes, and generally try to be a bastard. But instead of developing sophisticated weaponry, you'll develop the throwable rock. Probably. You can also capture and train dinosaurs (to clean the cave while you're at work, or whatever) and uniquely, you'll also be responsible for improving your tribe's gene pool: it'll be up to you who gets to shag who. Try to get a bit of inter-familial variety going, or you'll end up with a tribe of drooling banjo-player-from-*Deliverance* lookalikes. **Z**

HOT Line

Tracking the hottest games and their current release dates

Populous III (EA)	MARCH
The X-Files (Fox Interactive)	MARCH
Grim Fandango (LucasArts)	APRIL
Incoming! (Rage)	APRIL
ST: First Contact (MicroProse)	APRIL
Tanktics (BMG)	APRIL
Unreal (GT Interactive)	APRIL
Descent FreeSpace (Interplay)	MAY
Daikatana (Eidos)	MAY
Earthsiege 3 (Sierra)	MAY
EBT Tank (DID)	MAY
Half-Life (Sierra)	MAY
SIN (Activision)	MAY
The Dark Project (Eidos)	JUNE
Duke Nukem 4 Ever (GT Interactive)	JUNE
Falcon 4.0 (MicroProse)	JUNE
FIFA: World Cup 98 (EA Sports)	JUNE
Gabriel Knight III (Sierra)	JUNE
Blood II (Monolith)	JULY
Grand Prix Legends (Sierra)	JULY
Evolve (Psygnosis)	AUGUST
Prey (GT Interactive)	AUGUST
Championship Manager 3 (Eidos)	SEPTEMBER
Civilization III (MicroProse)	SEPTEMBER
Diablo II (Blizzard)	SEPTEMBER
Blade (Gremlin)	OCTOBER
Settlers II (Blue Byte)	OCTOBER
Carmageddon 2 (SCI)	NOVEMBER
FIGP3 (MicroProse)	NOVEMBER
Messiah (Interplay)	NOVEMBER
RPG (Gremlin)	NOVEMBER
Ultima IX (EA)	NOVEMBER
Anachronox (Ion Storm)	DECEMBER
Dungeon Keeper 2 (EA)	DECEMBER
Total Annihilation II (GT Interactive)	DECEMBER

Get with the program

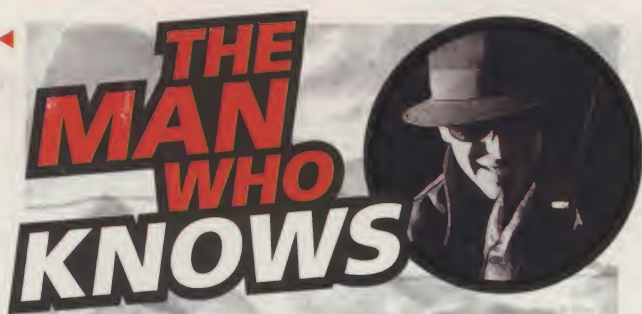
Boffins at the University of Manchester are appealing to programmers from around the world to write a new piece of software

to run on what was 50 years ago the world's very first computer. The 'Baby', or Small-Scale-Experimental-Machine, first saw the light of day on 21 June 1948, and is being rebuilt to celebrate its 50th

anniversary. All the competition rules, as well as a downloadable simulator, can be found at the University website www.cs.man.ac.uk/prog98. All entries must be received no later than 31 March,

and the winning Egghead will be invited to run his or her handiwork exactly 50 years after the first ever program was run, providing a highlight of the anniversary celebrations.

DATA PAD



She's back! Yes, that's right – it's the return of the token Lara Croft story...

New Year, New Lara. It's true; Kleenex factories all over the country have been put on standby following the appointment of the new Lara Croft. With the demise of the 'whining' Rhona Mitra and her ever expanding breasts, the adventurous English rose is now to be portrayed by, of all things, a French woman. Model Vanessa Demouy has been given the nod and has already appeared in a French magazine sporting various costumes, including wetsuit, evening gown, bikini, outdoor wear and classic Lara apparel. Predictably enough, a series of 'mucky' pictures have also been doing the rounds on the Internet and I can confirm that she is an extremely attractive lady with whom I would undoubtedly enjoy exploratory sexual intercourse on a regular basis. Having said that, she may look sensational but bear in mind that due to her country of origin she often squats above a hole in the ground to perform her ablutions. Then again, it's probably better if you don't. Moving swiftly on, Ms Demouy has already recorded the obligatory dire pop single, and it is indeed an aural atrocity, single-handedly destroying any credibility French music may have recently gained. Still, great buns... whatever that means.

Lauded by many as the publicity force behind the success of Lara Croft – although her outsized chest may have been a greater influence – Eidos Interactive's top marketing bod Larry Sparks has now left the company to become vice-president of European marketing at Interplay. Other *Tomb Raider* personnel already involved with Interplay include original game creators Toby Gard and Paul Douglas, who have set up a development partnership called Confounding Factor.

More Interplay news concerns their apocalyptic real-time adventure game *Of Light And Darkness*, developed by Tribal Dreams. Apparently they have recently finished filming some action scenes, and the various luvvies involved have been heaping praise on each other. The game stars James Woods as Gar Hob, the Dark Lord of the Seventh Millennium, and Lolita Davidovich as Angel Gemini, a former Las Vegas showgirl who sets out to prevent Gar Hob from entering the world as the Anti-Christ. The director for *Of Light And Darkness* is David Riordan, and he gushed: "We were very excited that James and Lolita liked the script. I'm a big fan of their work and thought they would be the ideal couple to bring Gar Hob and Angel to life." Great. Really great.

Less charitable news involves the legal wrangle over the *Civilization* trademark. MicroProse have filed a lawsuit against Activision, whose claim to the name is based on the grounds that they bought it from Avalon Hill. MicroProse feel that Avalon Hill had no right to sell the trademark, and in response to their actions have acquired Hartland Terfoil Ltd, who created the original *Civilization* paper game in 1980. Avalon Hill only began distributing the game outside Europe as of 1982, m'lord. The vice-president and general counsel of MicroProse, M Kip Welch, gnashed: "MicroProse is the publisher of the classic *Sid Meier's Civilization* family of computer game products and the pre-eminent holder of worldwide computer game and board game rights under the *Civilization* trademark. By bringing this lawsuit, MicroProse are serving notice that they are determined to protect their *Civilization* brand and intellectual property." The stakes are extremely high, as the franchise has sold more than two million units worldwide. And that kind of money buys a hell of a lot of pies.

There's more mitter at Sega, whose European office has 'released' 20 members of staff. This may seem small potatoes, but percentage-wise it's as drastic as the US cutbacks that occurred a few weeks ago.

Further unemployment news comes from 3DO, who have been forced to sack seven people due to the shelving of *Might And Magic Online*.

Ho hum, at least I've still got a job. Bye.

When animals retreat

Sim Safari should be something of a laugh when Maxis/Electronic Arts release it this coming spring. If you're childish – like us – the first thing you'd set up would be the chimp hut. If you're a skunk, it'd be a marketing department. But anyway, *Sim Safari* will appeal to those of us who like to keep large dangerous animals cooped up in small cages, as well as those of us that don't. Actually, you can make the cages any size you want, so if you really want to cut down the guilt factor (you politically correct geek), you'll be happy to hear that there's absolutely nothing to stop you putting three hippos in a leafy 20 square mile area of their own. Right-minded individuals would of course drop a few lions in there to keep them on their toes... 2



Back to the future

Recoil is a 3D blast-the-shit-out-of-everything-em-up, set in yet another all-powerful-computers-have-taken-over-the-world future scenario (Mmm. Looks like you get this month's Use of Consecutive Hyphens Award – Ed). The premise is that you're a present-day kinda guy, asked by hackers of the future to remotely



control one of their tanks in a fight against the machines. It'll have the traditional vast number of blast 'em up pick-ups – remote-controlled mines, lasers that bounce around corners, and so on – and since most of the environment can be tactically (or even just mind-numbingly violently) destroyed, promises action a-plenty. You can expect to see it from Virgin Interactive around June. 2

YOU READ
IT HERE
FIRST

Discworld game will be *Discworld Noir*.

Rayland, the people behind the smart-looking *Mad Trax*, have another game in development called *Big Bang*, details of which they are currently withholding.

We've seen some shots though, and must say it looks interesting. Well, we'll just have to badger them too.

Final Fantasy VIII is currently in R&D at Square Japan. US sources claim that we'll see the final game "hopefully before the end of the 20th Century", although an announcement will be made "before the end of '98". In the meantime Square are

putting the finishing touches to their latest adventure *Parasite Eve*, which is looking rather special.

Warren Spector's new game at Ion Storm is going to be a 'spy' adventure which will use the *Unreal* engine to turn backflips and impress us all. Assassination, covert operations and a blatant disregard for human life is on the cards, but as the game is only just leaving the design doc stage, we have precious little else for you. The bods at Ion Storm are hoping for a short development schedule (it'll use the *Unreal* engine, remember), so we should have more details on it for you, like, real soon ya'll. 2

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DARKENS: DON'T HAVE BRAIN CELLS TO REALISE THEY'RE ALIVE. LET ALONE FIGHT. CAN'T UNDERSTAND COMMANDS EVEN FROM THEIR LEADERS, SO THEY SPEND ALL THEIR TIME FALLING OVER THEMSELVES TRYING TO DEFEND THEIR THICK HAIRY REARS. CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THEY BOTHER TO BE HONEST. IF THEY HAD ANY SENSE THEY WOULD HAVE THE DECENCY TO STAY STILL WHILE YOU SLIT THEIR THROATS.



HUMANS: DON'T KNOW IF YOU NOTICED, BUT DO THESE GUYS SMELL! THEIR LACK OF EVEN THE MOST BUDIMENTARY HYGIENE SKILLS IS MATCHED ONLY BY THEIR ARROGANCE.... MINCING AROUND IN THEIR SHINY UNIFORMS AND BRAND NEW GUNS. SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME FIGHTING EACH OTHER OVER MONEY. ANY HUMAN WILL SELL OUT HIS ENTIRE RACE FOR A HANDFUL OF CREDITS. THEIR ONE REDEEMING FEATURE IS THEY REALLY BLEED GOOD WHEN CUT UP.



SCORPS: MOST RACES ARE PRETTY LOW DOWN, BUT THEY ARE ALL EQUALLY DISGUSTED AT THE FACT THAT SCORPS CAN'T EVEN FACE THEIR ENEMY SQUARE ON - THEY HAVE TO SNEAK ABOUT UNDERGROUND BEFORE THEY ATTACK. THE BEST OPTION IS TO GAS THIS GENETIC TRASH IN THEIR TUNNELS AND HOPE THEY CAN AT LEAST FERTILISE SOMETHING..... HOWEVER, THEY'RE BOUND TO FIND EVEN BEING MANURE A LITTLE COMPLICATED FOR THEM.



BENDIAN MERCS: DID I SAY HUMANS WERE ARROGANT? NOTHING COMPARES TO A BENDIAN MERC, GODS GIFT TO THE UNIVERSE IN THEIR OPINION. OVER MILLIONS OF YEARS OF NATURAL SELECTION AND EUGENICS HAVE PRODUCED THE UGLIEST SONS OF BITCHES IN THE KNOWN UNIVERSE. WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO CAPTURE, KILL AND OVERRUN ANY SETTLEMENT OTHER THAN BENDIAN MERC. (ALTHOUGH THEY'RE NOT ADVERSE TO 'HAVING A GO' AT THEIR OWN KIND). "MERCY IS FOR THE WEAK" THEY SAY. WELL, DO THE UNIVERSE A FAVOUR WHEN YOU SEE A BENDIAN MERC, GIVE'EM SOME OF THEIR OWN MEDICINE, AND POUND THEM MONGRELS INTO THE DUST.

A TODD PORTER GAME

ION
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INTERACTIVE

DOMINION

STORM OVER GIFT 3

HOT Shots

It's update central at *PC Zone* this month – it's that time of year again when the reviews dry up and the previews hit thick and fast. Seen scattered about this page are the latest in-game shots from a number of forthcoming titles, all of which we reckon could be rather, rather big.

Mysteries Of The Sith (LucasArts)

Mysteries Of The Sith, as Charlie pointed out last issue, will have an additional female character in the leading role. You know, a female – with tits and that. Anyway, in true *Jedi Knight* fashion, this force-wielding babe will get to leap and hack through vast, beautifully designed levels (from the same team as wot did *Dark Forces II*), while topping a number of new enemies along the way. Jabba the Hut has been spotted on one level, as has a huge tentacled creature with many arms. You're a little short to be a Stormtrooper – these are not the droids you are looking for.



Golgotha (Crack.com/Telstar)

Here, have a look at these – the very latest shots from the game they're all calling *Golgotha*. Publishers Telstar Electronic Studios have since stepped in to secure the distribution rights for Europe, Australasia and parts of the Pacific Rim, wherever the hell that is. *Golgotha* is being developed by Crack dot Com who are based in Austin, Texas, which also happens to be the setting for Richard Linklater's slacker film, *Slacker*. Crack dot Com previously gave us *Abuse*, and *Golgotha* promises to be a careful marriage of 2D and 3D gameplay in an action strategy format with a strong storyline. We'll see.





Plane Crazy (Inner Workings/Europress)

Inner Workings' new flight racing extravaganza *Plane Crazy* is almost finished. We've already seen a playable version showing new, previously unrevealed courses and vehicles. You can now see some of it for yourself as there's a playable version of the 'Border Dash' level on this month's cover CD – you'll find the rest (Monument Rush, Rain Forest, City Run and, ahem, Docklands) in the full version which is due out in March. Judging by what we've seen so far, Inner Workings are set to deliver a stunning-looking, speed-freak racing game of a seriously challenging nature – there'll be no time to admire the gorgeous scenery as you duck and dive to stay alive in some of the most deviously designed and danger-fraught races ever. Keep 'em peeled for a full review of *Plane Crazy* next issue.



Motorhead (Digital Illusions/Gremlin)

One thing's for sure, Digital Illusions' forthcoming *Motorhead* (no relation to the band, by the way) certainly loves Zone's new P233s. With 64Mb RAM and a zillion-speed CD-ROM drive it glides along at a silky 30-plus frames a second – and that's just the software version. This futuristic racing game is already proving popular in the office over a network, and that's with only three of the eight available courses in any sort of playable form. In spite of a general reaction of "That's never software...", 3Dfx versions are still planned, so prepare yourself for silly speeds some time around April when *Motorhead* is wrapped up and finally let loose to the lions.

PC
ZONE

our price

CHART
Predictions

STRAIGHT IN AT THE NUMBER ONE SLOT THIS MONTH IS *GRAND THEFT AUTO*. THIS 18 certificate game has been the subject of a fair amount of controversy since its release due to its joyriding connotations. The fast-paced game gives players the chance to drive dozens of varied vehicles around America's toughest cities outwitting rival gang members, mercenaries, hired killers and an entire police force. Certainly an exciting option if nothing else, and worth checking out if you're of adult status.

To take part in this month's Our Price Top 10 prize giveaway, just put pen to paper, answer the question below and send it in to: PC Zone, Our Price Competition (61), Dennis Publishing Ltd, 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ.

Our Price Question:**WHO DEVELOPED *GRAND THEFT AUTO*?**

Rules and restrictions: All entries must be received by Friday 13 March 1998. No correspondence will be entered into. Multiple entries will not be accepted. The Editor's decision is final and the winners will be notified by post. All other usual restrictions apply.



Welcome to PC Zone's version of *The Chart Show*, sponsored by Our Price. Each month it'll feature the titles we think will be flying off the shelves in the coming weeks, and it will also play host to exclusive news and competitions.

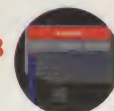
1

GRAND THEFT AUTO
(BMG)
£34.99



2

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2 97/98
(Eidos Interactive)
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3

TOMB RAIDER II
(Eidos Interactive)
£29.99



4

QUAKE II
(Activision)
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5

MYTH: THE FALLEN LORDS
(Eidos Interactive)
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6

DEPTHS OF DOOM
(One Stop)
£16.99



7

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(EA Sports)
£34.99



8

WORMS 2
(MicroProse)
£29.99



9

BLADE RUNNER
(Virgin Interactive)
£34.99



10

MONKEY ISLAND 3
(LucasArts/Virgin)
£34.99



DISCLAIMER: The Top 10 printed is correct at the time of going to press but positions, titles and prices may vary throughout the month.

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...Bullfrog

Peter Molyneux may have left, but Bullfrog aren't fazed. There's still plenty of talent squatting on the lily pad, as Charlie Brooker discovered on a recent visit to their Guildford HQ.

BULLFROG'S GUILDFORD HEADQUARTERS look decidedly sinister: it's an imposing mass of anonymous steel, curved glass and corporate logos. If this were Hollywood, it'd be the kind of place where a faceless team of scientists could covertly manufacture an android with the face of Yul Brynner, put the finishing touches to an ED-209, or finalise the packaging for sausage 'n' tomato flavour *Pot Mash*. Either way, the building's size and contemporary styling leaves you in no doubt whatsoever that the inhabitants are a) young, b) successful – and possibly c) sinister and deranged.

Inside the building there's a network of partitions, cubicles and apparently empty offices, plus a conference room, where *PC Zone* finds itself chinwagging with several of Bullfrog's foremost 'talents'; namely Glenn Corpes (*Magic Carpet* maestro and project leader on *Indestructibles*), Alan Wright (team leader *Populous: The Third Coming*), Dan Blackstone and Simon Carter (who both worked on *Dungeon Keeper* and are now tackling a 'mystery project'), Alan Wright (*Populous III*), and Sean Cooper (overseeing *Dungeon Keeper II*)...

PC Zone: Okay, first of all, what's this new *Theme* game?
Dan Blackstone: I know... but I can't tell you.

PCZ: Can we try to guess what it is?

DB: If you like.

PCZ: *Theme Reading Festival?* *Theme Government?* *Theme Numskulls?* *Theme Nunnery?* *Theme Bedlam?* *Theme Arse?*



Illustration shown opposite (clockwise from top left): Glenn Corpes, Sean Cooper, Dan Blackstone, Alan Wright and Simon Carter.



"Some companies make you work to a concrete game design. Where is the fun in that?" Simon Carter



Here's a taste of what to expect from *Populous III*, set for a May release.

DB: No. But those aren't bad suggestions. Let's call it *Theme X*.
Simon Carter: Not even *Theme X*. Just *X*.

DB: Aside from that, we're also doing *Theme Park 2*, which will have a completely new engine.

PCZ: How new?

Glenn Corpes: You'll be able to generate rides in it – they won't be generic objects designed beforehand in 3D Studio. You'll be able to say "Right, I want this track, this type of car, made out of this kind of material", and so on... and the engine will generate a 3D mesh for it. Also, the original *Theme Park* was set on this big flat piece of land: there's no reason why we can't use a more realistic landscape in the sequel. These are some changes that make a big difference, without even going into the whole gameplay side of it, which should be brilliant. It's still early days, but just changing the technology behind it suggests all kinds of new gameplay ideas.

PCZ: In what way?

GC: Well, for example, the castles in *Magic Carpet* weren't in the game at all until a couple of months before the end. We got the landscape effects working and then somebody said, "You could build castles out of those" – and that became the focus of the game. When we started we had no idea there'd even be any castles in it. Piling a lot of new technology into *Theme Park 2* will suggest new directions for the gameplay as we write it – we're not going to pretend we know exactly what's going to be in the finished version, because we don't.

PCZ: It sounds like the creation of a Bullfrog game is a rather organic process...

SC: Yeah. The reason *Keeper* took so long was because we didn't actually know what we were doing from week to week.

We'd think "What shall we do now?", and then put in some chickens for the player to slap about. We just kept fiddling with it. I think that's why Bullfrog games are so creative and have that unique feel; we just keep playing with them, toying around with things. Some companies will present you with a wad of notes and a concrete game design to adhere to – but where's the fun in that? The fun is playing around with it and trying to make it your own thing. That's how *Dungeon Keeper* turned out the way it did; if *Theme Park 2* and *Indestructibles* go the same way, they can't really go wrong.

GC: You can't sit there and design a game from scratch. There's been many a time I've seen games saved by an idea from a level designer two months from the end.

PCZ: It must be hard now that Peter Molyneux's left – not necessarily from a game design point of view, but from a publicity standpoint...

GC: Yeah. Peter was a good programmer and a brilliant game designer. The culture he set up at Bullfrog was probably quite unique, and that survives intact. But yes, we've lost a very good PR man and a very good game designer. He only ever worked on one game at a time while he was here, though. Apart from the odd design meeting here and there, the only ones he was directly involved in were *Populous I & 2*, *Powermonger*, *Theme Park* and *Dungeon Keeper*. Also, for

What's Your Game?



◀ the last two years, he wasn't actually here a lot of the time – he was away working on *Dungeon Keeper* – so it's not as if he suddenly 'left' when Lionhead were set up.

PCZ: Why do you think he left?

GC: For the reasons that he's given. The thing to bear in mind is that he was very much involved in the running of EA as a major worldwide corporation, so he had to fly around the world having meetings and stuff. So when he says "the corporate side got me down", he doesn't mean a bunch of suits walked in the door and told him how to run Bullfrog, he means that he got pissed off with having to fly to the States every few weeks, when he could have been programming.



"We definitely feel the need to prove that Bullfrog still have 'it' now that Peter's left." Glenn Corpes

PCZ: Do you feel pressure to prove to the gaming public that despite Peter's departure, Bullfrog still have 'it'?

GC: Definitely, yeah.

Alan Wright: But we don't want to rush things. I think that everyone in this building will agree that the most important thing to do is concentrate on producing high-quality games. SC: Bullfrog's always been about producing good games and not caring about the deadlines – and that shouldn't have to change just because Peter's left. And certainly, Bullfrog's a lot bigger than just one person. One person leaving, no matter how good they are, isn't going to cause the overall quality to come crashing down.

RL: But he was an enigmatic figure... and a brilliant PR guy.

PCZ: With such a recognisable figurehead, it was easy for the media to concentrate on Peter rather than the rest of the company. His departure could mean that you receive more recognition for your achievements than in the past...

Bullfrog have already set themselves high standards with games such as *Theme Hospital*.

SC: Maybe. But that's not what we do it for.

PCZ: No plans to slap your faces on the front of the packaging then?

SC: (Laughs) No. Or our names. I wouldn't want titles along the lines of *Sid Meier's Gettysburg*, where the name of the programmer's bigger than the game title.

PCZ: That could work against you, couldn't it? David Braben can't be too happy following the *First Encounter* debacle...

DB: Or Kevin Toms, the soccer management guy. His face was on the front of every one of his games, and then apparently somebody recognised him in a 'His n Hers' page in *Fiesta* or something, posing nude with his wife. (Erm, allegedly – Legal Ed)

SC: (Giggles) Sorry. I was just thinking... can you imagine Peter appearing in *Readers' Wives*? ⑦



Dungeon Keeper 2

While seated around the table chez Bullfrog, we took the opportunity to ask about some of the company's forthcoming ventures. Glenn Corpes spoke at length about the highly promising *Indestructibles* (a project which is now very much back 'on'), which we will be covering in a future edition of *PC Zone*. In the meantime, however, here's a little information on *Dungeon Keeper 2* – destined to be one of the most anticipated sequels of the year...

PC Zone: What's new in *Dungeon Keeper 2*?

Sean Cooper: Loads of stuff. If you look at the original *Keeper*, there aren't any real kick-arse spells in there, especially compared to something like *Populous*, where they cause massive destruction. We're going to bring in Mana on land, so it forces the player to build his dungeon. The original *Keeper* maps are 85x85 squares in size – we're going to have huge maps of up to 1000x1000, so you can fit 16 to 32 players on it.

PCZ: Are we going to see more polygons this time around?

SC: Yeah, polygon characters – that's all in the R&D stage at the moment, so we may end up using a mixture of the two, but there'll be polygon characters for the first-person mode.

PCZ: What other changes are there?

SC: Well, this time round we're really going to emphasise the fact that you're evil. And we're really working on the combat, which isn't particularly enforced in the first one. There it's a case of 'one fight and it's all over'. We want a fight, then another fight, then another fight, and so on – so you've got a constant battle, pushing your troops forward.



PCZ: How much has been done on the game so far?

SC: A lot. The design's almost finished, the programming kernel's there – which is pretty much the same as the first one. You'll be able to play over the Internet, which is fairly crucial.

PCZ: Are all the creatures from the first game going to put in an appearance?

SC: Not all of them, just some. We're going to strip a few out and concentrate on really evil creatures which do specific jobs. You'll see some really big creatures, too.

Glenn Corpes: Another thing to bear in mind is that the original *Dungeon Keeper* engine was out of date when the game came out. That engine was about two-and-a-half years old. If we'd known how long the game would take to finish, we'd have rewritten the engine. *Dungeon Keeper II* will be a lot more contemporary.

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First



AVING ALREADY DONE THE business on PlayStation, *Micro Machines V3* is coming to a PC near you. As is Steve Hill, whatever that means.

FOR THOSE UNFAMILIAR WITH THE FIRST two instalments, *Micro Machines* is a top-down racing game involving tiny toy cars steaming around some curious household locations. Eschewing ultra-realistic simulations of real tracks, the races instead take place over scenarios such as the top of the bath, a pool table and even the breakfast table, with tea and toast providing unorthodox obstacles.

Essentially a multi-player experience, it's carved itself a niche in gaming history by being one of the best games to play on returning home from the pub – drunk and pissed up on booze – with aptitude at the game acting as an impromptu surrogate breathalyser. Those who find themselves regularly careering off the screen are well advised to take a taxi home.

For the first time, the all-new version will feature 3D-modelled environments – with 3Dfx support – comprising 48 tracks littered around the familiar *Micro Machines* world, including a school desk, science lab, beach, restaurant and garden. The 32 vehicles – sports cars, buggies, power boats, monster trucks, transmutable cars and camper vans among others – can also be fitted with hidden weapons such as forcefields, fireballs, mines and even a bonnet-mounted hammer, which we are assured delivers earthquake-like blows. A further unique tool in the armoury is a grabber claw which snatches an opponent's vehicle from the track and hurls it to the back of the race – something that could doubtless become intensely annoying to the party being hurled (hee hee).

In keeping with past efforts, this version of *Micro Machines* will again feature an array of suitably wacky drivers. Spider is a Home Counties buffoon who permanently wears shades to disguise his lazy eye. Jethro is a Jamaican who enjoys reading detective novels. Jade is a Scottish soapdodger, and she likes sleeping and ambient music. Cherry from Chelsea enjoys riding her pony and making potions with her chemistry set. Chen from Japan spends entire weekends watching his collection of Manga videos with the curtains drawn. Bonnie from Sarf London raps in an all-girl group. Dwayne from California gets off on snowboarding, surfing and skateboarding. And finally, Walter from Rotterdam enjoys surfing the Internet and eating Pot Noodles.

Although network capabilities have yet to be announced, there should be support for up to eight players, with race modes including head-to-head, challenge, time trial, keepsies, teams and party play. Players will also be able to collect, test and gamble special prize cars.

Codemasters will be releasing *Micro Machines V3* in spring this year. Vrooom! 🚗

Encounter



Micro Machines V3

The all-new version will feature 3D-modelled environments, while 3Dfx support will keep things moving as quickly as ever.



Forty-eight themed tracks and 32 different vehicles should be enough to keep even diehard *Micro Machine* addicts happy.



Vehicles can be fitted with hidden weapons which will add to the multi-player challenge.



Product details

Developer: Codemasters
Publisher: Codemasters
Release date: Spring
Website: www.codemasters.co.uk

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W

HEN IT COMES TO FOOTIE management games, can anyone topple the mighty *Championship Manager*? Jeremy Wells is our man in the commentary box.

OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS SIERRA, Gremlin, Virgin, Ocean, MicroProse and Electronic Arts all plan to release a football management game in an effort to cash in on World Cup fever and the success of *CM2*.

With the Collyer brothers' 'all new' *Championship Manager 3* not due until the autumn, there's a real opportunity to get in quick and satiate fans desperate to click on the latest stats, transfers and teams before the new season kicks off. However, *CM2* fans can now download weekly updates from the Net or edit their own data before setting up a season, so if another footie management sim is to succeed, it'll have to offer considerably more.

Tim James, avid football management fan and project leader at developers Krisalis, is only too aware of this. "*Championship Manager* is a great game, but it is looking a little dated," he argues. "With *PFA Soccer Manager* we're trying to offer something a little different and a little deeper. Instead of just shouting about the PFA licence, we've tried to use it to make the data as accurate as possible. For example, player contracts, signing-on deals and bonuses in other games are often wildly inaccurate and very limited. We've actually talked to the managers and players and asked them for their input."

A look at some early code confirms what the team is trying to achieve. Managers will be able to negotiate quite complex deals with players, including loyalty and cup bonuses that will affect their morale and in turn their performance within the team. "The loyalty thing is particularly important when signing a player," maintains Tim. "He might stand to lose a massive wedge if he decides to flit off abroad a year before his contract is up, so you'll be able to hold on to star players longer. It also means you have to choose and negotiate your signings wisely, or you could lose a lot of money. Of course, you can leave the negotiations at the default settings, but ultimately it does add to the game."

Krisalis are also focusing on training and tactics. In an effort to keep it simple but effective, players will operate within a zonal system: defence, midfield and attack. Tim explains: "Although you won't be able to instruct players to make specific runs, where you place them on the pitch within your preferred formation will affect how they play, the runs they make, the passes they attempt and whether they play on the attack or defensive. You'll also be able to instruct the team to dig in, play a passing game or go all out for goals." Training will be more basic, but spend enough time on the training ground and players will improve on certain skills; push them too hard though and they may suffer fatigue.

With the player stats yet to be collated, it's hard to tell how *PFA Soccer Manager* will compare next to the mighty *Championship Manager*. However, if Krisalis make the most of the PFA licence, get the figures right and make the interface a little easier on the eye,

PFA Soccer Manager

The Windows interface is dull but familiar, and it does at least allow you to compare players' ratings.

Name	Age	Position	No.	Rating	Value	League	Other	Total
Dennis Bergkamp	28	Striker	10	88%	£6,300,000	0	0	0
David Seaman	33	Goalkeeper	1	87%	£260,000	0	0	0
Ian Wright	33	Striker	11	87%	£260,000	0	0	0
Tony Adams	30	Defender	2	86%	£1,400,000	0	0	0
David Platt	31	Midfielder	6	85%	£1,400,000	0	0	0
Emmanuel Petit	26	Wing-Back	3	84%	£3,500,000	0	0	0
Rens Garde	31	Defender	4	83%	£1,000,000	0	0	0
Martin Kaucen	31	Defender	5	82%	£800,000	0	0	0
Pateck Vasea	22	Midfielder	8	82%	£1,600,000	0	0	0
Steve Bould	34	Defender	14	81%	Free	0	0	0
Christopher Welsh	21	Striker	15	78%	£1,200,000	0	0	0
Scott Marshall	24	Defender	16	77%	£670,000	0	0	0

Name	Length	Contract End	Salary	Loyalty
Dennis Bergkamp	4	09/07/99	£25,000	£263
David Seaman	3	04/08/98	£27,000	£143
Ian Wright	2	12/06/98	£27,000	not
Tony Adams	4	31/01/00	£28,000	£257
David Platt	3	29/09/99	£5,000	£28
Marc Overmars	4	15/07/00	£22,000	£218
Emmanuel Petit	3	19/04/99	£3,200	£19
Rens Garde	2	03/07/98	£3,400	not
Martin Kaucen	2	04/05/98	£2,900	£6
Pateck Vasea	4	28/11/99	£2,000	£22
Steve Bould	1	13/02/99	£4,200	not
Christopher Welsh	4	02/02/99	£1,600	£7
Scott Marshall	4	07/11/99	£1,900	£18

Player Information: Sell Player Loan Out Team Contracts

Rating: 84%
Speed: 78%
Stamina: 75%
Aggression: 78%
Shot Power: 87%
Shot: 81%
Ball Control: 74%
Passing: 64%
Tackling: 74%
Heading: 74%
Flex: 74%
Marking: 69%
Character: 69%
Morale: 74%
Fitness: 74%

Name: Marc Overmars
Age: 24
Team: Arsenal
Position: Winger
Squad Number: 7
Appearances: 0
Disciplinary Points: 0/21
Disciplinary Status: Not Suspended
Suspension Remaining: N/A
Value: £2,800,000
Injury Status: Not Injured
Expected Recovery: N/A
Percentage Shots Completed: N/A
Percentage Goals Saved: N/A
Percentage Goals Saved: N/A
Percentage Tackles Won: N/A
Percentage Passes Completed: N/A

Contract End: 15/07/00

The tactical editor is quite simple and allows for varied tactics.

Negotiating player contracts should keep most managers pretty busy. Yes, they really do earn that much.

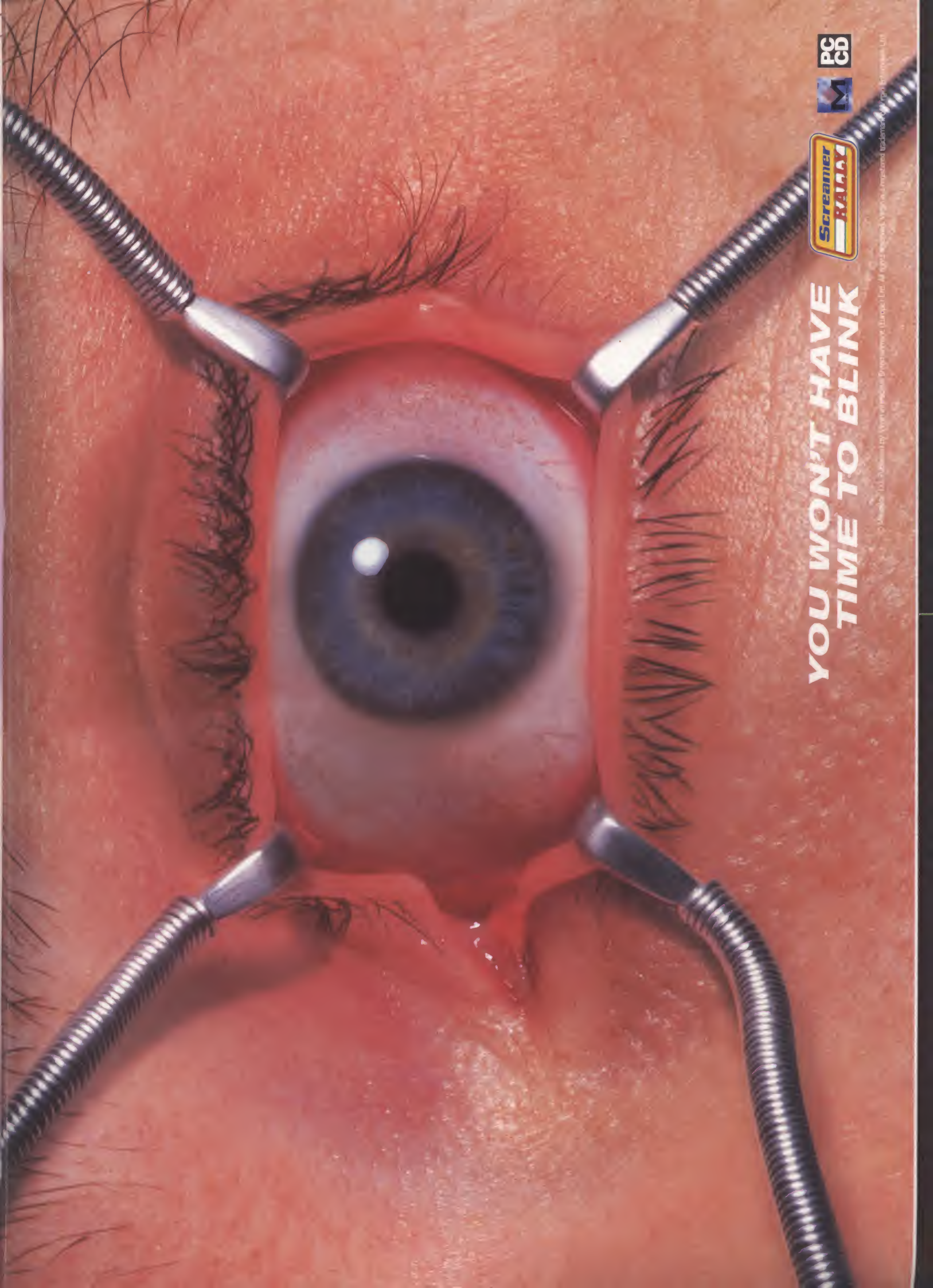
The match will be represented on-screen by thousands of different motion-captured sequences, possession stats and a brief commentary.

Chelsea 0 - 1 Arsenal

First Half 46' Possession 54% Shots On Goal 2

Product details
Developer: Krisalis
Publisher: TBC
Release date: Autumn
Website: www.krisalis.co.uk

Pause Custom Team List



**YOU WON'T HAVE
TIME TO BLINK**



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TOUGHEST TIGHTEST MOST INTENSE RALLY DRIVE AROUND



Screamer Rally is the racing game with edge. With tracks that demand total concentration and 5 cars that require total respect, the best will once again be put to the test.

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"A slick, challenging and different game. It really is top stuff."

- PC ZONE

"An exhilarating arcade racing game that looks gorgeous and is great fun to play."

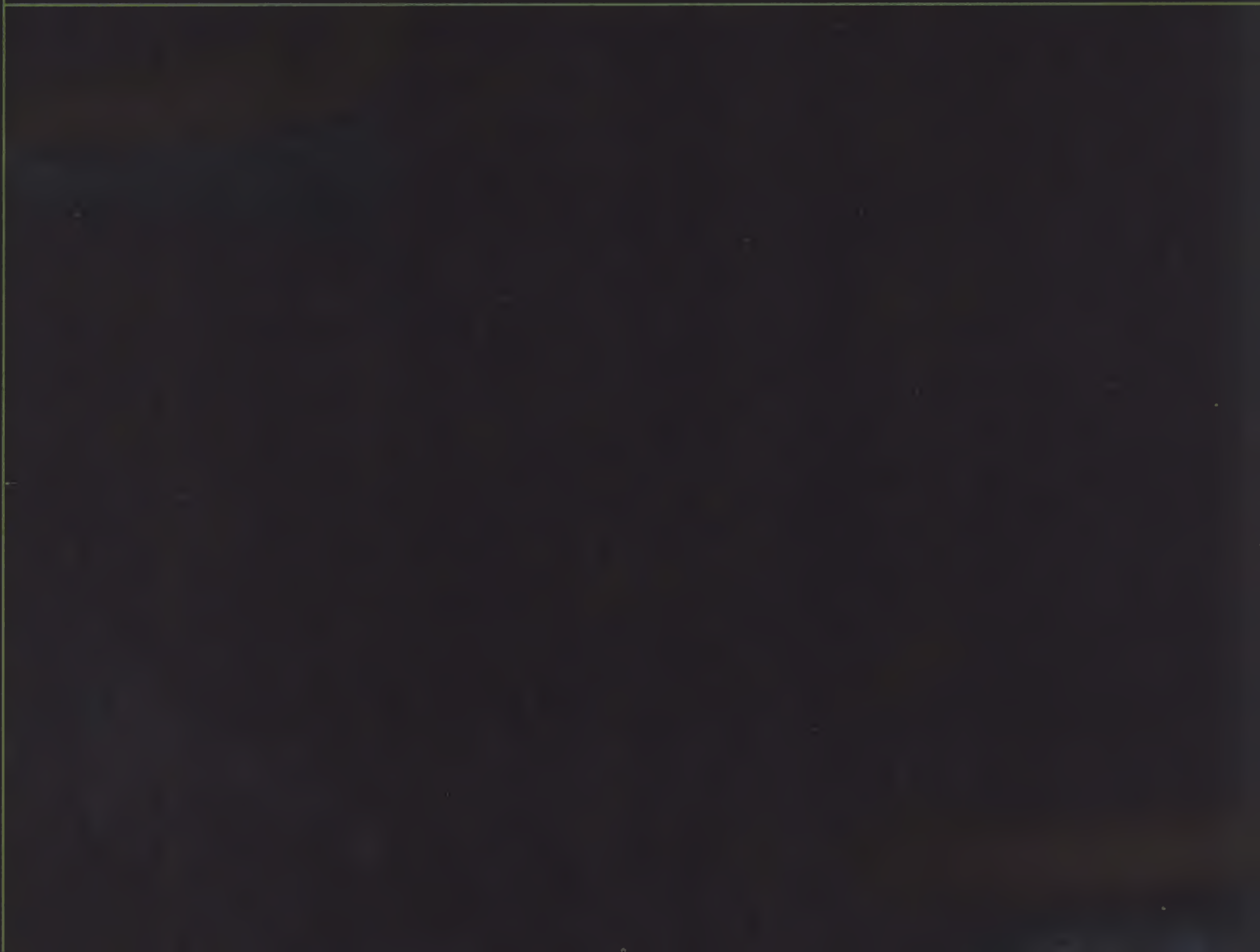
- ULTIMATE PC

"All in all, it's a fast-paced, hugely satisfying rally game."

- PC GAMER



The Future of 3D Gaming Began Here



T


HERE ARE A LOT OF RACING games out there, but not that many with just two wheels. Jeremy Wells put his foot down to glorious Guildford to see if Criterion's latest high-speed bike racer is more David Essex than Barry Sheene.

DRIVING GAMES ARE TWO A PENNY ON the PC nowadays, but bike racing games have been rather less prolific. Electronic Arts' *Moto Racer* was a bit of a disappointment, while Sega's conversion of their arcade classic *Manx TT* was just plain awful. Virgin have got the officially licensed *Super Bikes* coming their way from *Screamer* developers Milestone, and although it looks very tasty indeed, it isn't due for release until the autumn. Which is where Guildford-based developers Criterion come in.

For the past few months, a large part of the team have been beavering away on *Red Line Racer*, an arcade-style super-bike racer with a blistering frame rate and gloriously detailed graphics. Jonathan Small, head of game development at Criterion, explains why they felt two wheels were better than four: "We wanted to do a racing game, but not just another driving game. There are just so many car-based racing titles out there – some are good driving games, but we thought we'd do something a little different."

In an effort to keep the frame rate high and the graphics totally spoogeome, Criterion have decided to make *Red Line Racer* 3D accelerator only. It's a bold step, but Jonathan is confident it's the way ahead: "It's the only way we can sustain a decent frame rate and keep the detail." He continues: "We wanted to make a racing game that was arcade-quality in terms of both speed and graphics, and you just can't do that without some kind of 3D acceleration. We'd have to make too many sacrifices if we were restricted to software only."

A lingering gander at some beta code should be enough to convince almost everyone (well, those who have a 3Dfx or PowerVR card tucked away inside their PC) that Jonathan has a valid point. *Red Line Racer* does indeed look rather gorgeous, thanks in part to the numerous graphical effects that the new 3D technology brings. As well as real-time lighting and particle effects (such as sparks), the game features procedural textures (which mean you'll see skidmarks, wet road surfaces, motion blur, etc), backdrop animations and animated texture maps. In other words, it looks the mutt's nuts.

Four different racing environments (Beach, Alpine, English Countryside and Desert Canyon), eight race circuits, an eight-player network option and even force-feedback joystick support, should keep interest from waning too quickly and secret 'comedy' bikes may even raise a chuckle. We'll let you know for sure next month. 

Red Line Racer

MMX Technology means you get true 3D sound effects. Ah, so that's what it does!



It's maddeningly fast when you play in visor-cam mode. If truth be told, it's actually too fast.



Animated textures, backdrop animations and procedural textures make for a lush graphical experience.



Product details

Developer: Criterion Studios

Publisher: Ubi Soft

Release date: March

Website: www.csl.com/studios

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Battlezone Put You in Command of a Tank.



ACTIVISION

In 1998,

Battlezone Puts You in Command of a War.

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Command full-scale attacks with over 30 unique units, such as tanks, infantry and mobile assault turrets. Call in artillery, deploy wingmen and manage resources — all from within your tank.



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**Take Command on the Battlefield,
Not Above It.**

PC CD-ROM OUT MARCH 1998

TANK

- 1 FOLLOW ME
- 2 GO TO NAV
- 3 ATTACK
 - PICK ME UP
 - GET REPAIR
 - GET RELOAD
- 7 HUNT

0 RECYCLE

SPACE ATTACK FIGHT

ALT NO ACTION

SHIFT CANCEL

Grizzly Tank:

Configure a Grizzly, the key American tank, right on the battlefield.

"PC Ga

Actual Non-Hardware Accelerated Screenshot.

■ Command System:

An innovative menu system integrates troop and resource management for full control from the battlefield.

■ Solar Array:

The Solar Array provides power to your factories, gun towers and other energy-intensive units.

■ Radar Tower:

The Radar Command Tower must be powered continuously to increase radar range and accuracy.

■ Gun Tower:

The Gun Tower, a devastating long-range defensive unit, must be powered by the vulnerable Solar Array.

■ Multiplayer:

Enter multiplayer battles in full Strategy mode over LAN, modem or Internet, or up to eight-player battles in Deathmatch mode.

■ Graphics:

Features full D3D support and a fast software-rendering engine which incorporates actual footage from NASA space expeditions.

■ Campaigns:

You decide which army to command: play either the Stars-and-Stripes or Red Brigade campaigns.

■ Pilots:

Pilots are a resource. Run over or shoot enemy pilots who've lost their vehicles in battle, and protect your own.

■ 3-D Radar:

A topographical 3-D radar displays your base location, unit placement, field of vision and enemy position.

■ Scrap Meter:

The Scrap Meter measures the Scrap available for the Factories to build new units.

■ Scavenger:

Send your Scavenger to collect valuable Scrap. Gather from scrapfields or destroyed units on the battlefield.

■ Weaponry:

Spend resources to reconfigure your vehicle's weaponry on the move in the midst of battle.

"...weeps tears of joy at the birth of a genre" - PC Gamer
 "the giant leap for computer games" - Ultimate PC

ALL THE Rage

Having churned out a number of games for other publishers, Rage Software are now aiming for a greater share of the glory by publishing some of their own titles. They have development teams based all over the country, and **Steve Hill** embarked on a whistle-stop tour of their Liverpool, Birmingham and London studios. It's not all dancing girls and piña coladas, this lark, you know.



SINCE THEIR INCEPTION IN January 1992, Rage Software have developed titles for some of the industry's biggest names, including the corporate monsters that are Electronic Arts and GT Interactive. Over the past six years, their profile has steadily grown, thanks to games such as *Power Drive*, *Striker*, *Darklight Conflict*, *Jonah Lomu Rugby* and *Trash It*. In 1997 they took the decision to move into self-publishing, although they will continue to develop titles for the major companies. The four Rage studios are based in London, Liverpool, Birmingham and Newcastle, although we didn't visit the latter on the grounds that there are only so many bleak Northern outposts a man can take, and besides, we wouldn't have understood a word they said. Rage's strategy of having premises the length and breadth of the country enables local talent to be nurtured, with the majority of employees culled from the immediate vicinity. Indeed, the various studios are fiercely proud of their regional identity and are quite competitive, regularly meeting up for gangland-style rumbles, with some particularly savage beatings being handed out. Read on and see who you fancy...





(Main)
A normal day's work at the Rage headquarters in Bootle, Liverpool, featuring Terry, Barry, Jimmy and Mick.
(Left to right)
Some of the impressive Rage back catalogue, namely *Power Drive*, *Striker 95*, *Trash It!*, *Darklight Conflict* and *Jonah Lomu Rugby*.

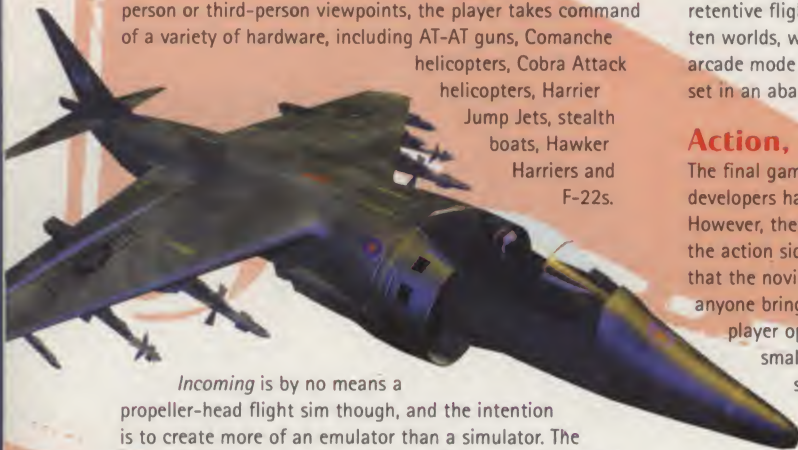
'Rage Liverpool: Incoming



HE 'POOL: LAND OF STRAIGHT-HAIRED women, gap-toothed comedians, the world's premier soap opera and a couple of football teams that used to win things. The shellsuits have since thankfully subsided, with only small pockets of turquoise resistance belying what was arguably the fashion mistake of the century, not to mention a genuine fire hazard. Before we crash on, there's an important point that needs clarifying. All Scousers are thieves. That's not crass regional stereotyping, it's a fact. If it's not nailed down, they'll have it over.

The Scouse wing of the Rage operation is situated in sunny Bootle, a dockside area where you could probably procure the services of an inexpensive prostitute. Of course, the programmers at Rage can't confirm this - they're only allowed out at Christmas, after which they spend the rest of the year locked in a darkened room. The main project at the time of visiting is the highly-fancied *Incoming*, the progress of which we've been tracking with some gusto.

Graphically redefining the standard for shoot 'em ups, the mission-based affair has enough wanton destruction to satisfy the most avid explosion fan. With a choice of first-person or third-person viewpoints, the player takes command of a variety of hardware, including AT-AT guns, Comanche helicopters, Cobra Attack helicopters, Harrier Jump Jets, stealth boats, Hawker Harriers and F-22s.



Incoming is by no means a propeller-head flight sim though, and the intention is to create more of an emulator than a simulator. The simplistic flight models mean it should be accessible to the average gamer, rather than restricted to the type who enjoys reading 300-page manuals and wearing corduroy trousers. On-line help will be available within the game and typically there'll be one clear objective, with the action always taking place around the player, dispensing with the need to sit for half an hour chasing a blip on the radar.

Alien invasion, na-na-na-na-na

For those who insist on a story, the tale behind *Incoming* is pretty much the time-honoured alien intervention gubbins. Aliens attack Earth, humans ward them off, and for good measure, then pay a visit to the alien planet and teach the

bastards a lesson they won't forget. As the game progresses, the story pans out sequentially, cut-scenes eschewing FMV in favour of the actual real-time game engine.

The rudimentary plot facilitates the action taking place over six different game worlds, namely Africa, Antarctic, Oceanic, Florida's Cape Canaveral, the moon, and the alien planet. The first three worlds largely involve defending various installations from the attacking hordes; Cape Canaveral culminates in four space shuttles being kept intact, which will then take you to the moon and, in turn, to the aliens' home planet. Then the first four worlds are revisited in reverse order as they are now infested with aliens.

Roles are reversed too. The player now has the task of destroying the buildings previously defended, and can witness the elaborate explosions that only a shit player would have been privy to first time around. In a further twist, the player can actually find an alien fighter, fit it with a navigation system and cause some alien-flavoured mayhem, much like the Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air did in the risible *Independence Day*. The various worlds, or the Earth-based ones at least, will feature recognisable landmarks rather than meticulously mapped terrain, distancing *Incoming* further from an anally retentive flight sim. As well as what effectively amounts to ten worlds, with six scenarios in each, there's a customisable arcade mode and some hidden missions, including an odd one set in an abattoir involving the destruction of mad cows.

Action, man

The final game will have some aspect of strategy, but the developers have yet to decide how great a role it will play. However, they will confirm that the emphasis will be on the action side of things, and they hope to produce a game that the novice can simply pick up and play. Of course, anyone bringing out a game now without an array of multi-player options is likely to be laughed at in the street by small children - and Rage are taking no chances. A split-screen mode will cater for two players on one machine, or four players on two machines.

Incoming will also support LANs and modem-to-modem, and Rage are now experimenting with latency problems over the Internet. Fifteen specific scripts have been written for the two-player game, but as well as the usual deathmatch-style game, there are various rule sets, including an aliens versus humans option.

This Is Music

No game is complete without some 'Bangin' Choons' to complement the gameplay. All of *Incoming's* music is being recorded in-house, and influences cited include The Prodigy, Underworld, Future Sound Of London, Toto and Chris De Burgh, the latter pair being a hilarious easy-listening untruth. Yes, it's more of that funky dance beat that these youngsters seem so enamoured with, although anyone attempting to dance to the soundtrack would need a degree of stamina: the relentless pseudo drum 'n' bass mirrors the frenetic on-screen action. The game will feature four or five basic tracks with faster versions of each for crucial moments; context-sensitive, if you will. The music will play randomly throughout, thus preventing any particular tune being associated with a tricky bit and therefore getting on your tits.

Incoming will be compatible with virtually every gadget on the market, including ThrustMasters, SideWinders and Force Feedback joysticks, and the obligatory accelerator cards. The graphics are impressive, but not cheap. The minimum spec is a P166, with a P200 recommended, along with the odd 32Mb of RAM. Serious gamers should wait until the end of March, by which time *PC Zone* should have been granted an exclusive review. You lucky people.



Incoming's fancy split-screen mode in full effect.



Explosive action from the game they're calling *Incoming*.



A helicopter shooting boats, yesterday.



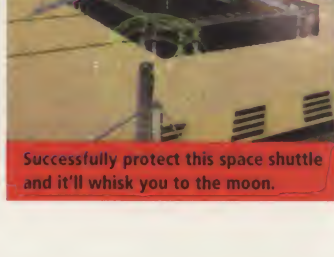
That'll be one of those helicopters. You probably know what sort.



Successfully protect this space shuttle and it'll whisk you to the moon.



Successfully protect this space shuttle and it'll whisk you to the moon.



Successfully protect this space shuttle and it'll whisk you to the moon.

Oh my god! Oh Jesus Christ! Oh no!



Rage Birmingham: Striker 98, Deadball Zone, Hostile Waters

SO, TO THE CONCRETE JUNGLE OF ENGLAND'S second city. Brum Rage is based on the eighth floor of a tower block, overlooking the beauty of this city of rare culture, the place that gave us Jasper Carrot, cod-reggae veterans UB40, and Benny from *Crossroads*. The Rage office is populated by some affable, undoubtedly intelligent and talented people, who happen to sound like Barry from *Auf Wiedersehen Pet*. Their three games in development are all due for release towards the end of this year.

Striker 98

Following a year out in the wake of the decidedly average *Striker 96* (the long-running series which has sold more than a million units worldwide on all platforms), Rage look set to bounce back with this year's model. The virtually compulsory big-name endorsement comes from Chelsea's manager, Ruud Gullit, who is hoping to ensure some 'sexy football' as well as providing a face that's recognised all over Europe. The commentary should also be familiar: Rage are opting for the manic screaming of Jonathan Pearce, aided and abetted by Big Fat Ronald Atkinson and the ubiquitous Trevor Brooking. Uniquely, rather than merely adding assorted glib comments, Atkinson will chip in with what's tantamount to advice, offering suggestions such as putting a bit of swerve on the ball or getting to the by-line, not to mention 'giving it the eyebrows'. Also, if a team is performing really badly, the commentary will deteriorate into blatant insult and derision.

Striker 98 will feature the top two divisions in each country so alas, there'll be no place for The Mighty Chester, although there is some consolation to be had in the form of World Cup teams. Entire domestic seasons can be played out, with the top four teams in each nation then competing in a pseudo Champions League.

In football games realism is everything, and Rage are currently negotiating to use actual player names – well, nobody wants to field the likes of Brian Riggs or Randy Sole, do they? Further legal mither has come about regarding the terrace chants: the Anfield mainstay of *You'll Never Walk Alone* can't be used lest Gerry Marsden, he of Merseybeat combo Gerry And The Pacemakers, agrees a royalty. This sets a precedent though, because the artistic rights to the moving anthem "You're gonna get your fuckin' heads kicked in!" could, in theory, be claimed by any ageing lout.

Unlike certain high-profile football games, *Striker 98* is being developed by genuine football fans. Having said that, they do include supporters of Tranmere Rovers, Preston North End and West Bromwich Albion. Boing!

Deadball Zone

Futuristic sports games have yet to make any real impact on the PC, with Psygnosis' *Riot* proving the latest forgettable effort. If we've learned anything from the genre, it's that in the future (whenever that is), sport will involve propelling a metal ball in some kind of fashion, preferably one that's on fire or under the influence of some as yet undiscovered futuristic force. Immense levels of violence are mandatory.

Deadball Zone doesn't deviate greatly from this template, with teams of eight players competing in a heavily-armed hybrid of football and basketball. Not exactly 'jumpers for goalposts', but some thought does seem to have gone into devising the sport before simulating it. Said metallic sphere has to be hurled into a goal, with various points awarded according to the distances covered. The man in possession can be punched hard in the face, sliced up with a chainsaw, shot with a gun, and even blown up. There are some special moves, including that great mainstay of visual comedy, a hearty kick in the balls. Queensberry Rules do not apply.

The lazy man's description of *Deadball Zone* would be *Speedball 3D*, as Rage are only too aware. But if they can come anywhere near to matching the playability of the Amiga classic then there'll be ice cream all round.

Hostile Waters

A third-person perspective war 'em up with a heavy strategic bent, *Hostile Waters* will be appreciated by anyone who gets off on large explosions and, to the untrained eye, there's also a superficial resemblance to the *Incoming* engine.

In charge of a big old aircraft carrier and the harbingers of death contained therein, the player can dot vehicles all over each level depending on the terrain and the mission. Each vehicle will behave according to preset personalities, so some may be particularly intelligent, others a bit gung-ho, while some may be downright cowardly (or extremely sensible, depending on your viewpoint). The artificial intelligence will take charge of rudimentary tasks, but for more intricate manoeuvres the player will have to take the helm, be it of a tank, aircraft, helicopter or other unspecified war machine.

The scenery is fully interactive, and large holes can be blown in the landscape, even to the extent of flooding valleys by destroying dams. Rage are also proud of their dynamic barometric weather system, which has a direct effect on strategy and combat. For example, if it's about to piss with rain, it might be an idea to get your tanks up a hill and, if it's really windy, flying helicopters may not be the best option. It's also advisable to wrap up warm and take a waterproof coat. We await the John Kettley endorsement.



A kick in the balls. Entertainment!

This is the future, and we're all playing *Deadball Zone*. Lots.



A helicopter shooting a ship, today.

More snow than a media party.



Striker will feature some impressive hi-tech stadia designs. This is just one of them.



We hand you over to Trevor Brooking: "When I was at West Ham, Alan Devonshire would often blah blah blah..."

'Rage London: War Of The Worlds



THE STREETS ARE PAVED WITH GOLD, OR silver at least, 'cos we all live in the sunny south east. Let me take you by the hand and lead you round the Streets of London, where the majority of people only remove their heads from their arses to answer their constantly chirruping mobile phones, and where a pint of beer leaves you little change from three English pounds. Rage London are based betwixt Euston station and painfully trendy Camden, where it's apparently fashionable to resemble a *University Challenge* contestant circa 1974.

Due to be published by GT Interactive, Rage are currently working on *War Of The Worlds*, which is based on arguably the most famous science-fiction story of all time. Thus far, HG Wells' seminal novel has inspired an Orson Welles-narrated radio play that inspired mass panic, a questionable movie, a pioneering 1970s soundtrack and an execrable late-night television show. Now, an interactive PC CD-ROM experience is on the cards, something that Wells could scarcely have even begun to comprehend as he put quill to parchment a century ago.

Essentially an action strategy affair in the vein of *Command & Conquer*, there are also elements of the classic board game *Risk*. Britain is split into 30 sectors, with the Martians based in central Scotland and the humans in London. Rather than consisting of separate missions, the game revolves around an ongoing campaign, with victory going to whichever side takes the other's base. Set at the turn of the century, the combat is between Victorian vehicles and long-legged Martian machines, and each sector can be claimed, with territorial progress being made up or down the country.

The idea to make such a game actually came from Jeff Wayne, whose *War Of The Worlds* soundtrack is now celebrating its twentieth anniversary, having sold fairly constantly since its release and knocking up an amazing 100,000 units last year. In fact, the game will feature a full re-recording of the album, with a number of fairly well-known dance acts being muted to undertake the task.

Inevitably, some artistic licence has been taken with the game, but Jeff Wayne has the power to veto every part of it, as does HG Wells' estate (feel free to add your own car joke here). With this year also coinciding with the hundredth anniversary of the book, expect to hear a lot of shouting when *War Of The Worlds* hits the shelves in May. **Z**

Victorian Folly versus Martian Mechanisation. Who will be victorious? You decide.



And you thought paranoia about Martian attacks was new. Happy 100th birthday!




"The chances of anything coming from Mars, are a million to one, he said." God I feel old!

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LINX

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FINAL FANTASY



VII

You've seen the hype, and turned green with envy – *Final Fantasy VII*, available on PlayStation only... until now. **Paul Mallinson** takes the first in-depth look at Squaresoft's epic role-playing adventure, due out soon on PC.



NOTCHING UP SOME 15 MILLIONS SALES worldwide, the *Final Fantasy* series could be considered a 'bit of a success' in anyone's book. At the end of last year, PlayStation owners climbed over themselves in a dash to get hold of a copy of the seventh title in the long-running Japanese saga. Reports in the console press described *Final Fantasy VII* as "the biggest game ever", "a heck of an achievement" and "a game that everyone should own". Judging by the public response, *Final Fantasy VII* struck a resounding chord with everyone that played it and was responsible for a period of mass gaming hibernation over the long cold winter months.

The dust has only just settled and Squaresoft are now preparing to fan the flames of *Final Fantasy* fervour all over again with a brand new PC conversion of this incredibly popular console adventure.



(Top) My goodness – it's, it's, it's so... enormous!
(Above) The main man Cloud is given a funny 'potion' by a strange man. Not a good move.

Jessie
"Code deciphered"



Cloud (below right) joins up with a colourful array of people along the way. How you react to them determines how the game pans out in the long run.

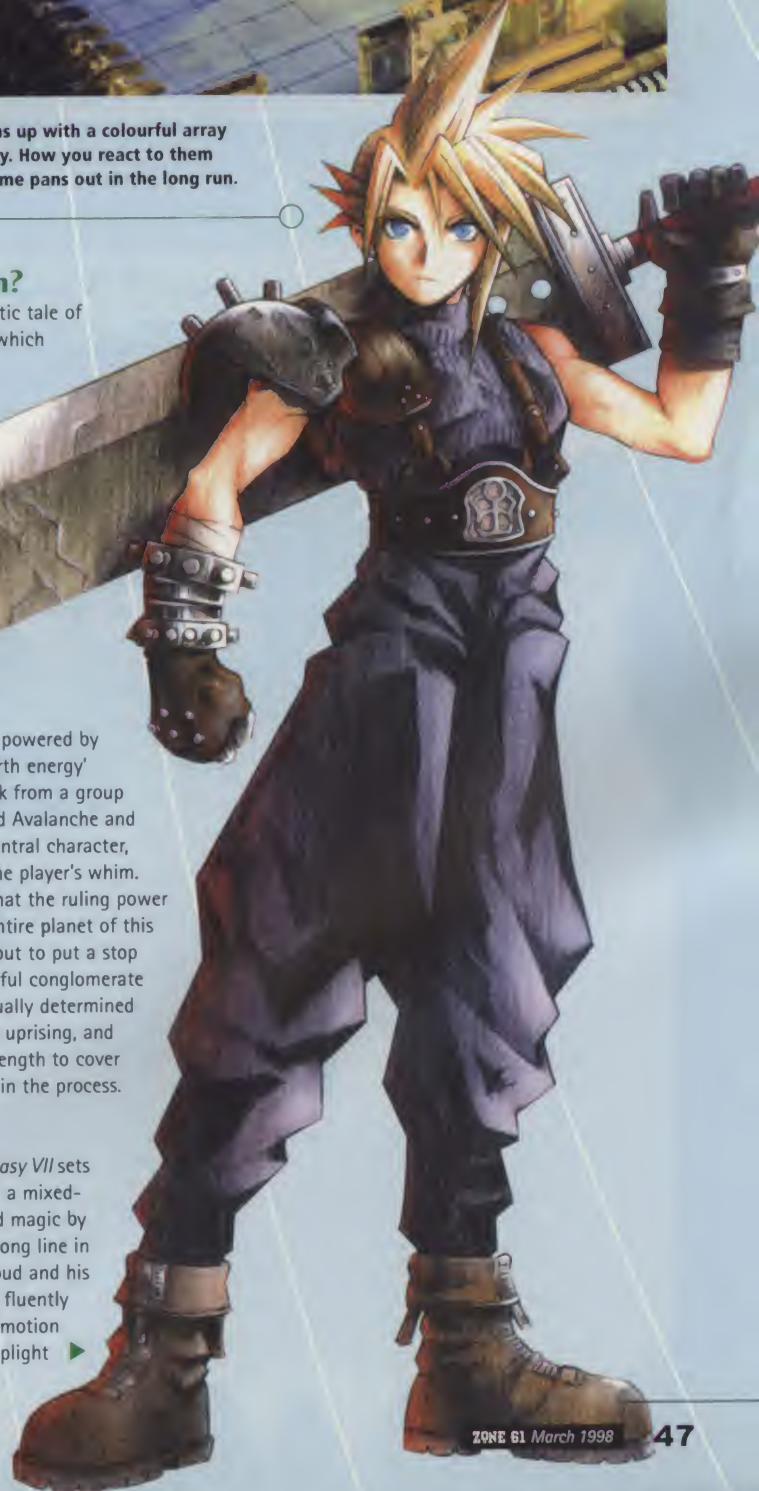
Relationships – who needs them?

Final Fantasy VII is a futuristic tale of life, love and relationships which starts out in a grimy neo-conurbation known as Midgar.

This walled city, powered by a mysterious form of 'earth energy' called Mako, is under attack from a group of rebel Eco terrorists called Avalanche and led by Cloud, the game's central character, who's also the subject of the player's whim. Avalanche are concerned that the ruling power in Midgar is draining the entire planet of this life-giving energy and are out to put a stop to it. The city's ultra-powerful conglomerate forces of Shinra Inc are equally determined to stamp out this renegade uprising, and are prepared to go to any length to cover up their sinister intentions in the process.

A real interest

From the outset, *Final Fantasy VII* sets out to draw the player into a mixed-up world of technology and magic by way of an exceptionally strong line in character development. Cloud and his rebel compatriots converse fluently and realistically, invoking emotion and a real interest in their plight ►





(Above, clockwise) This dragon is quite small compared to some of the later *Final Fantasy* enemies. Some are so big, the camera has to zoom right out to get them in view. A style of its own: *Final Fantasy VII* draws influence from Eastern and Western pop culture, as well as ancient Japanese mythology and mysticism.

To port or not to port? That is the question...



Chocobo racing with Randy Fujimoto and his merry band of programmers.

PC Zone recently spent some time playing the forthcoming PC version of *Final Fantasy VII* at Squaresoft's Costa Mesa offices in California. Here we had a lengthy chat with Randall Fujimoto (vice president of development) and Son Ton (senior software engineer) about the various pros and cons of inter-platform porting.

PC Zone: When did development of the PC version actually begin?

Son Ton: I came on board last October. I was brought in to deputy the lead programmer, so there were three of us in total. The original PlayStation code, which at the time was still

in development and being tweaked, made its first official move to PC around then.

PCZ: Were you part of the original team?

ST: The original PlayStation team? No, the original PlayStation coding was all done in Japan.

PCZ: If our sources are correct, it was the biggest team ever assembled to produce a single game. Just how many people were involved?

Randall Fujimoto: There were 15 core programmers – although at one point there were more than 20 working on the project – and tens of artists. The total team size was well over 100; they're all named in the end credits of the game.



Squaresoft's swanky glass offices as seen from the swanky Italian restaurant where our swanky top reporter Mallo filled his face.

Square used a lot of outside companies and contractors to help make the game what it is today.

PCZ: So was the conversion difficult?

ST: It hasn't been that easy – it definitely wasn't as easy as many people imagine most ports to be. This is really Square's first 'porting' effort, and the original code wasn't really designed to be translated to other platforms – it was highly optimised for the PlayStation. Also, another factor was the communication gap between America and Japan – only one or two of the original team could speak decent enough English to help us with the programming complications. We've now got in-house translators to help us with the problem.

PCZ: How many of the original team are working on the PC version?

ST: We have one guy who came over about two months ago. He finished his work on the PlayStation version in Japan before moving over to the States – he was mainly involved in putting together the menu system for the battles.

PCZ: Will the PC version be at all different to the PlayStation version?

ST: No, this is a porting project, and we're not really allowed to change the script or gameplay. We're enhancing the graphics, and maybe the controls – but the game stays essentially the same as the PlayStation version. We use whatever's given to us.

PCZ: And do as you're told...

ST: That's right.



◀ – something Squaresoft have worked very hard to achieve. Strangely, almost all the dialogue in the game is text-based, and some PC owners may find it a little disconcerting at first. Most of us who have grown up on a staple diet of digitised speech and 'proper' voice characterisation may have reservations, but PlayStation owners maintain that this text-only system works and is rather like the gaming equivalent of reading a good book.

The main reasoning behind this technological sideways step is that it's the only practical way to incorporate the mass of dialogue – not to mention the fact that it would otherwise take more than ten CDs of data to work effectively. Which just wouldn't do now, would it? And believe me, there really is a huge amount of speech in the game, all of which pops up in easy-to-read dialogue boxes as the players act it out.

Handbags

Interspersed within the moderately linear adventuring aspects of *Final Fantasy VII* is a completely random 'real-time, turn-based' combat system that forms an exciting backbone to the story itself. Cloud and co can be wandering along, minding their own business, when – all of a sudden – the display will cut away to a menu-driven 'Battle Screen' as the 'handbags' come out. The system itself is easy enough to use, but the options presented to the player during combat are staggering to say the least (especially later in the game when magical 'Materia' stones become more important). With every turn, each character in the party is offered the option of an 'attack' move (which is powered up depending on equipped

Squaresoft sleep with Eidos

A game this big almost certainly demands 'carte blanche' from prospective publishers. Squaresoft, having 'shopped around' with the PC version, finally plumped for Eidos Interactive as their worldwide bed partners. Rejecting big-money deals from the likes of GT Interactive, Electronic Arts and Activision, ever-growing software giant Eidos once again flexed their financial muscles and came up with the best deal for Squaresoft – a company not short of a few bob themselves. The cost? A cool £2million.



Formed in October 1995 following the acquisition of the Domark Group (including Core Design, Simis, US Gold and Big Red Software), Eidos Interactive have already shown that they are more than capable of producing top-selling titles, and currently hold major publishing deals with some of the biggest development teams in the world (Ion Storm, MGM, Pure, Looking Glass and Inner Loop, to name but a few). Squaresoft are confident that Eidos can do the business with this conversion of one of the biggest games of all time.

“The amount and variation of magical attacks is enough to make any RPG boffin spooge with delight.”

PCZ: What would you say to the people who say that the in-game dialogue is a little bit 'cheesy'?

RF: Good – if it's what people want. We've had some criticism about Barrett's dialogue (*Barrett is the big black guy with a jive-talkin' style of his own – Ed*), saying it's racist and all – but the way he speaks is supposed to bear some similarity to the tough-talking BA character in *The A-Team*! Our localisation people thought it'd be fine to portray that kind of guy because he's already a big movie figure.

PCZ: What sort of influences have the original designers taken into *Final Fantasy VII*? *Animé (The art of Japanese animation – Ed)* is the most obvious one, especially in the game's portrayal of magic.

RF: Yeah – the battle sequences are pretty spectacular. They really spent time fine-tuning the system this time. In previous *Final Fantasy* games, the battles sometimes got a bit tedious. After 20 or 30 battles you'd get bored, but in this one – because there's just so much to see and do – it's interesting the whole way through.

PCZ: One thing we noticed was that the music during battles is rather repetitive and doesn't change much, but it doesn't get on your nerves either. It's actually quite catchy. How did they manage that?

RF: (*Laughs*) They had pretty good composers.

PCZ: How many?

RF: Five, maybe more.

PCZ: What games are Squaresoft playing at the moment?

ST: The entire team are still playing a lot of networked *WarCraft II*. Personally, I'm playing *Riven*.

PCZ: What do you think about the current explosion of first-person shoot 'em ups – have Squaresoft ever been tempted to come up with a 3D engine and have a go at their own *Quake II* or *Jedi Knight*?

RF: Maybe, although we feel that Square is more of a trendsetter than a trend-follower. Being a follower doesn't really work for us – games such as *Final Fantasy VII* redefine genres and attract

many followers, and that's a situation we're currently more than happy with.

PCZ: So as a trendsetter, what kind of minimum specs are you recommending for *Final Fantasy VII*?

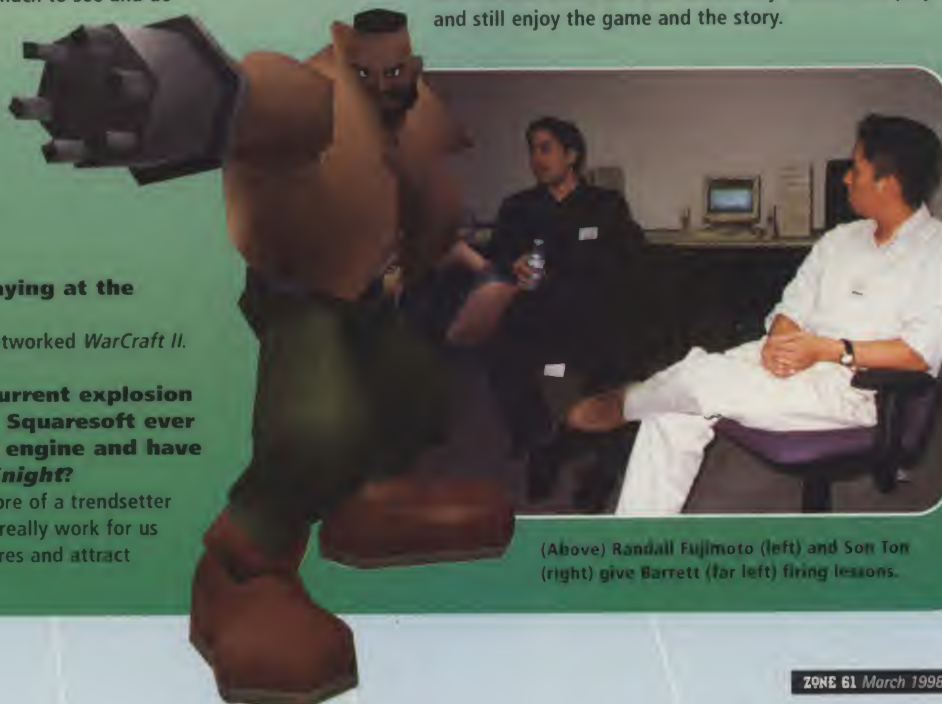
ST: Probably P133. We'll recommend 32Mb RAM, but it will work in 16.

PCZ: Still three CDs?

ST: We could end up with four. We're looking at the possibility of a DVD version as well.

PCZ: What does *Final Fantasy* offer that other role-playing games – especially on the PC – don't?

RF: PC role-playing games and console role-playing games are vastly different. RPGs on the PC tend to be very numbers-oriented, whereas we think our game will appeal more to the mainstream. We've got the numbers, stats and the depth if you want them, but they can be pretty transparent and you can play through the game without even referring to them if you prefer. You can make *Final Fantasy VII* as complex as you want, so someone who's not that technically minded can play it and still enjoy the game and the story.



(Above) Randall Fujimoto (left) and Son Ton (right) give Barrett (far left) firing lessons.

A brief history of Final Fantasy

The *Final Fantasy* series first hit the streets of Japan in December 1987 – a year after the formation of developers Squaresoft. In 1988 and 1990 parts II and III came out, before a platform change in 1991 saw Square's first-ever Super Nintendo outing with *Final Fantasy IV*. In December '92 the Japanese SNES-owning public queued around the block for *Final Fantasy V*, before queuing around the block again in April '94 for the final 8-bit sixth instalment in the series. Three years later and *Final Fantasy VII* marks its debut on the Sony PlayStation to major worldwide acclaim.



Final Fantasy



Final Fantasy II



Final Fantasy III



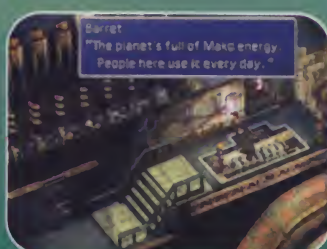
Final Fantasy IV



Final Fantasy V



Final Fantasy VI



Final Fantasy VII



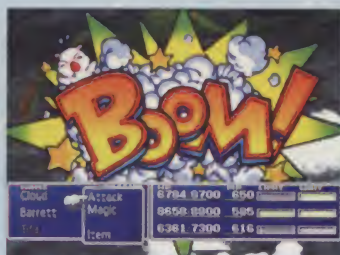
◀ weapons and health status), a 'magic' move (which varies depending on equipped Materia), or the chance to use an item in their inventory. The amount and variety of magical attacks is in itself enough to make any self-respecting RPG boffin spooze with

delight, and visually the moves are acted out in stunning special effect-laden 3D. Victory in battle equals experience points equals more power equals bigger bangs in combat. But defeat, on the other hand, equals the loss of a character equals the end of the game. Which, considering the gigantic proportions of *Final Fantasy*, wouldn't be very good going at all.

Vastly enhanced

This new PC version, we're told, will be pretty much identical to the PlayStation release, bar one very important feature: vastly enhanced graphics. The pre-rendered flick-screen environs are exactly the same as before, but everything else – including the battle sequences and the brilliant *Mario64*-style 'World Map' stages – have been souped up beyond belief... if you have a 3D accelerator card, that is. 3Dfx-ed up *Final Fantasy VII* is an impressive light show of colours and effects, and you shouldn't need too high-spec a machine to get the best out of either. So now it'll be the turn of PlayStation owners to look at the game in envy.

But there's far, far, far more to *Final Fantasy VII* than can possibly be described in a single preview. Players can look forward to uncovering hundreds of secrets, surprises, arcade-style sub-games, with the promise of many, many hours of tough, enlightening adventuring on the way. We'll be keeping a sharp eye on it over the coming months before its release in May. So stay tuned... 2



(Left to right) Tifa looses off a 'mega flare' spell, as everyone stands back... Cloud's amazing 'fart lighting' move backfires with staggering effect. That's one up to Shinra we think... The main difference between the PC and PlayStation versions will be the graphics – especially when they're 3D accelerated.

Product details

Developer: Squaresoft

Publisher: Eidos Interactive

Website: www.squaresoft.com

Release date: May

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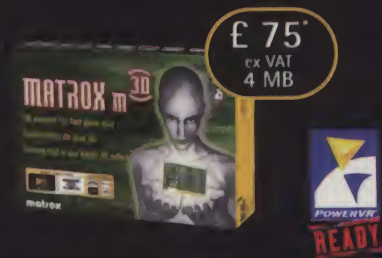
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The only way is up for this plastic population. Those who are familiar with the original *Sentinel* will find that the gameplay has remained exactly the same.



SENTINEL RETURNS

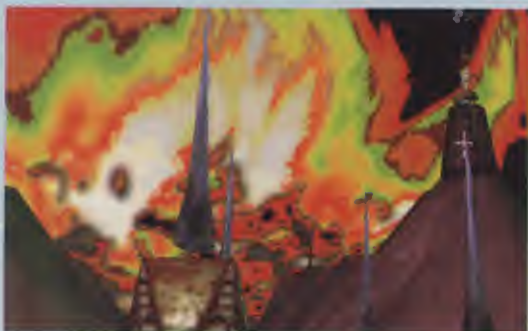
Geoff Crammond's *Sentinel* was one of the most innovative games ever produced, and Hookstone Developments are now giving it the PC treatment. Keith Pullin investigates a game that has even attracted the interest of a Hollywood legend.

T

HE PLOT COULD BE PURE '50S HOLLYWOOD sci-fi; by injecting an unknown substance into another equally unknown specimen, a bizarre micro-world is created. As far as

the player is concerned, this mountainous, first-person perspective, chequered domain is dominated by the Sentinel, a kind of organic lighthouse that permanently scans his kingdom for intruders.

Your challenge is to ascend from the lowest valley to the highest hill, absorb the Sentinel's energy and replace it as overseer. John Cook, whose company No Name Games owns



The Sentinel and his watchful general loom large. Luckily your three-boulder-high tower will allow you to suck the Sentinel dry.

the rights to the *Sentinel* name, explains: "The basis for *Sentinel Returns* is the most perfect game concept I've ever come across. It's so elegant on almost every level, but the player isn't overwhelmed by its complexity and completeness."

Elegant, as in leggy French bird? I don't know. But the gameplay is actually quite simple: every object on the landscape has an energy value – a tree is one energy point, a boulder two and so on. If you can see the square your target's standing on, point and click with the mouse and you'll gain its power. Simple, yet undeniably strange.

Getting up the mountain is a cinch – suck up enough power to create a robot host (three points) and then transfer into it. By teleporting up the eerie landscape, new trees and objects come into view. Trouble is, the ever-vigilant Sentinel is up in the director's box keeping a full 360 degree watch on what's going on below. Foreign bodies that stray into his line of vision will feel their energy depleting faster than an ME sufferer. Sentries are also deployed by the Sentinel as

Kaboom! The Sentinel watches the fate of some poor sap who overdid it on the Vindaloo the night before.



(Above) You can view a level before you play it. The red eye at the top is the Sentinel. (Right) The higher levels will be teeming with Sentries – just look at all those yellow eyes.



extra security and, like their master, they will scan and drain the life force of potential foes.

Boulders are predominantly used for building towering structures upon which a cloned robot host can be placed. However, they are also pretty much key to the game because if you don't have enough energy to create one, you'll find that you won't advance very far. There are 650 specimens (worlds) to examine in total, along with a random level generator upon completion.

What's it all about then?

So, how would you describe it? Strategy? Puzzle? Arcade? God game? In the words of Cook: "Sentinel Returns demands more brain power than C&C, produces more adrenaline than Quake II, is as easy to play as Tetris, and is more chilling than throwing a handful of ice cubes down your trousers."

It's also extremely fast moving. You feel like you're a commando, jumping closer to your prey from one safe covered position to another further up the mountain. The first few levels seem easy enough and I managed to breeze through them in a couple of minutes, although producer Emma Killillea remembers one particular playtester spending an entire morning on the first level. I guess the fact that you can have energy drained by an invisible foe will bemuse a lot of people. Normally, a fatal bug in the program would be the culprit for such behaviour, but in this unique context it's actually deliberate. If you look hard enough you can easily find the culprit anyway; spangly trails of energy arc across the sky towards your foe, which is a bit of a giveaway really. It is possible to get a half-scan; this happens when the top half of your body can be seen, but the square you're standing on isn't in view. For example, a nearby tree might be changed into what's known as a Meany (aaah! Surely not the blue meanies?) which will then annoyingly 'hyperspace' you to another part of the world – probably lower down.



A four-player option is also promised.

One of the biggest tricks is knowing how fast and in which direction the Sentinels' and Sentries' heads are turning. Suss this out and you can generally keep one step ahead of them.

Another gripper will be the multi-play options: serial links, modem and network play with deathmatch levels and player vs player action is promised. However, four players is the limit – any more than that and it could get a bit crowded.

Above all, *Sentinel Returns* is incredibly tense, and the John Carpenter soundtrack only enhances the claustrophobic and frightening atmosphere.


Carpenter, the brilliant and talented director of *Assault On Precinct 13*, *Halloween*, *Christine* and *The Thing* among others, had never been anywhere near a computer game soundtrack in his life, simply because no one had ever asked him. So when The Cook approached The Carpenter, the Hollywood legend was delighted to oblige. With the deal signed, he was then left alone to create. As John Cook says, "You don't tell John Carpenter how you want it done."

Original sin

The game was original when it was released in 1985, and it still is today, but as John Cook reveals: "All publishers say they like originality, when in reality they are structured to reject almost anything that cannot be put into a comfortable genre box. The fact that *Sentinel Returns* is an action/strategy/arcade game with a hint of puzzle element sends marketing departments into something of a paddy."

"Sentinel Returns is more chilling than throwing ice cubes down your trousers." John Cook, No Name Games

Thankfully, some people at Psygnosis remembered the original and were more than keen to sign up this version. A June release is planned, which is curious because the alpha version I played was virtually bug-free, but Psygnosis want it to be absolutely spot on. John Cook and Hookstone agree with them too – after all, there are already more games planned. But would they talk about those? Not yet.

So what about a film with John Carpenter directing? Hmm, that might be just a little too abstract... 

Product details

Developer: Hookstone Developments

Publisher: Psygnosis

Website: www.psygnosis.com

Release date: June



All the textures are mapped onto chicken-wire creations like these.



What you lookin' at?

Some of the things you can expect to stumble across in *Sentinel Returns*...

SENTINEL

This sucker sits atop the highest point of the landscape. His beady eye roams through 360 degrees and if he spies you, you'd better get the hell out of there quick. Your goal is to take over his position.

SENTRY

The Sentinel's generals are just as soul-destroying. They will drain your life in the same way as their master. On some levels they are strangely absent; on others they are all over the place.

MEANY

These are created out of trees when a Sentinel or Sentry cannot see you

properly. They will lock on to you and hyperspace you into a seriously dodgy location. Infinitely infuriating, but at least they're not blue.

TREE

Trees are worth one energy point and they can be found all over the landscape. They are also a valuable source of energy, so go on, gobble 'em up!

BOULDER

You can build huge towers with these. If you're going to get higher you're gonna need to create these. Worth two points.

ROBOT HOST

Value of three energy points. Place on top of stacked boulders or any strategic point on the landscape. Now transfer

every breath they take
could be your last

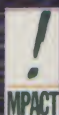
It wasn't recreation.

It was reconnaissance.

They've visited our planet many times before and all we've been asking ourselves is: do they exist?

Fact is: they know we're here.

Now they're returning.. with the intention of staying.. to make all this their own.. our land, our lives, our air.



Land, air and sea arcade
action combat

Awesome line-up of military
hardware:

AT-AT guns, Track Tanks,
Sand Skimmers, Hovertanks,
Stealth Sea Craft, Attack
Helicopters, F22 & S/VTOL
Aircraft + Alien Fighters to
name but a few

65 diverse missions across
6 spectacular worlds

"Incoming is likely to be nothing short of spectacular"
PC-ZONE

"Astonishingly beautiful"
PC GAMER

"Incoming's technology enables the game to achieve a
graphical look and frame rate similar to that seen on the
very latest arcade machines"
PC FORMAT

"The greatest looking and technically smart 3D game
so far, as of now it's a technical front-runner"
PC GAMING WORLD UK

3D
3D ACCELERATOR
CARD REQUIRED

Full Force Feedback support

3D spatialised sound

2 player split screen

Modem to Modem and
Serial link

8 player LAN Network play

Atmospheric soundtrack

Stunning lighting FX

WORKS WITH



INCOMING

LUX ET ROBUR

Rage
Software plc

DAIKATANA



SVERRE



ANDERSON



HOOPER

DAVID McCANDLESS FINDS HIMSELF ONCE AGAIN AT THE DOORSTEP OF *DAIKATANA*, JOHN ROMERO'S IMPENDING 3D SHOOTER. THIS MONTH HOWEVER, HE CONTENTS HIMSELF WITH A LITTLE BIT OF LEVEL DESIGNING...

AS ANY *QUAKE* BUFF WILL TELL you, the key ingredient to any 3D shoot 'em up is the levels. You can chuck in as many wazzy graphics as you like, jam in a wealth of juicy Satanic imagery, big steaming weapons, and then top the whole lot off with a 3D engine that would make God Himself say, "Hmmm, that's pretty realistic. I might use that engine on my next project." But if you don't have credible, exciting, good-looking and playable levels, you might as well hang up your game-designing trousers and sell yourself down the docks.

To that end, at the start of the *Daikatana* project, Mister Romero set about gathering himself a set of highly talented level artistes to form his core team. And where, you may ask, did he recruit this talent? Not from an agency or by advertising, but via the Internet. As you are probably all aware, the on-line amateur level-designing community, spawned originally from *Doom* and then *Quake*, is huge. Romero already knew who he wanted, so he simply went out and got them.

"He just told us to pack our bags," recalls John 'Dr Sleep' Anderson, who's working on *Daikatana*'s Greek era levels. "I said, 'When? Next week?', and he replied: 'No, now!' Two days later I was in Dallas, staying at Romero's house."

Only a year ago, Dr Sleep and his fellow level designers, Norwegian Sverre Andre Kvernmo, Matt 'DaBug' Hooper and



Steve Ruscoe, were all doing their nine-to-five jobs during the day only to then live alternate lives in the evenings – namely slamming together *Quake* levels.

Hooper is famous for one achievement in particular – producing DaSkull, the first custom-designed *Quake* level. So what? you might say. Well, the thing is Hooper didn't use an editor or a graphics package – he used a text editor.

"Everyone went crazy – they thought I was joking. There were no editors available, but I had some graph paper and sketched it out. I didn't think it was a big deal, but then once it came out, suddenly I was a celebrity. Some people still won't believe that it took me just a week and a half."

The other members of the team have similar stories to tell. Dr Sleep was picked up by Epic to work on early versions of *Unreal* and then made his pilgrimage to Dallas. Sverre Kvernmo used to live in the UK (regular readers of *PC Zone* may remember articles about his talents) before being snapped up by id to do the Master Levels for *Doom*.

And now, three years on since they were all wandering Knee Deep In The Dead, here they all are in the Ion Storm madhouse working steadily but surely on *Daikatana*'s time-travelling episodes.

Sverre is currently working on a virtual scale-model of Alcatraz for the final San Francisco time zone. You can take a little tour of the cells or the showers, and then go outside to the watchtower which, we've been assured, will collapse noisily and pleasurably at the end of the level. Every little detail is now in place: the mottled staircases, the gruesome sewer system, rows of blinking fluorescent lights, the fear of



More detailed levels and plenty of coloured lighting effects, thanks to the *Quake II* engine.

A DIARY

PART 4



The time-travelling storyline will allow for levels that vary dramatically in terms of design and feel.

sodomy. It's taken Sverre a month's work to get to this stage.

"I really didn't see this career coming at all," he says.

"I've been playing games for years and years, and it's really amazing that I'm here at all. I wanted to be an architect or do art, and this is dead in the middle between the two."

Most of the levels are on the verge of completion. Matt Hooper's medieval environments, with their caverns and fields and wooden houses, are now finished. Steve's futuristic first episode opener has only a few nips and tucks to go. And Sleep's glorious Greek project – half Ray Harryhausen, half *Up Pompeii* – is looking both shiny and excellent. There's still a little way to go, however.

"We've got the *Quake II* code dump now," explains Sleep, "which means we now have to go back and implement the new features it gives us. Most important of all is the coloured lighting, but also the face count."

Face count?

"Yeah, when you're designing levels, you're fighting this limitation all the time," says Hooper. "Put simply, with basic *Quake* you can only have about 350 polygons or faces in the view. With *Daikatana* we're pushing for 500 to 600 faces. One monster has around 500 polys, so in any one view, you can only have as many polygons as there are on one monster."

Consequently, the boys don't have free licence to create vastly intricate ballrooms and rock structures. Every new feature in their levels is a fight between aesthetic quality and whether it will run well on Joe Schmoe's Pentium 133 – a fight that often results in some heartbreaking sacrifices.

"You've got to fight that and yet still remain creative," says Kvernmo. "I have these cool rocks on one of my levels that look so realistic. But the face count was too high; it was slowing the frame rate down, even on my Pentium II. So in the end they had to go."

If you harbour desires about designing levels (and let's face it, we all do), you may think these boys are not only both lucky and privileged, but that Romero also fuels them with cookies and high-end machines to keep them going. The reality however, is that most of the designers, for example, have scorned id's own level designer and use a shareware level editor called BSP instead. "It's the best," says Hooper. "There's nothing you can't do with it."

So readers, what's to stop you? If you're thinking of

delving into level design, remember it's doesn't only involve stringing a couple of rooms together. It takes an average of four weeks to build a good-sized *Quake* map. Starting from scratch with maybe a half-formed idea in their heads or a graph-paper sketch, these boys painstakingly piece together their rusted dungeons, toxic waste depots and bombed-out warehouses. They carefully choose the frayed wallpaper.

They place and position flickering lights to create swathes of shadow or alluring traps. They move objects, enemies and weapons to optimum positions. They pace your progress so you don't get bored, too scared or too lost. They design secret areas to further titillate your brain on return visits. They may start you off in a pretty room and then gradually unveil the rest of the level and break it around you. Or they may just start you off smack in the middle of an earthquake and pepper your escape route with oubliettes, broken elevators and crumbling floors.

Then they play it over and over again, a zillion times, until it pleases them and scares the merry hell out of you.

Only then is it close to being finished. Got that? **Z**

Like LucasArts' *Jedi Knight*, *Daikatana* will also feature expansive outdoor levels that represent a stark contrast to the claustrophobic mazes and tunnels of *Quake II*.





The Lionhead Diaries: Part 2

All in a day's work...

An 'average' day for Steve Jackson involves programming – and pampering pets.



M

Y FIRST OFFICIAL DAY AT LIONHEAD WAS 9 June 1997. The previous day I'd had a phone call from Peter Molyneux. He sounded worn out: "Steve, hi. You know you're planning to come in tomorrow morning at 9:30? Well, do you think you can make it a little bit later? Around 1pm? Perfect."

What's this? I thought. I'd never ever been asked to make sure that I arrived at work LATE before. Working at Lionhead was certainly going to be different...

As I was to discover, Molyneux culture breaks the mould of traditional working practices. Bleary-eyed programming staff drift in between 10am and noon, which I initially found a little worrying. If everyone worked six-hour days, how long was our first project going to take to finish? What I hadn't appreciated though was just how much everyone loves their work. The coders may well leave the office around 7pm, but they habitually take their machines home with them. Often, after an evening out, they return to the office for a few more hours' work. Sessions lasting until 4am are considered fairly normal practice.

As a result, Peter, Mark, Tim and Demis have developed Lionhead's basic programming libraries and tools – the underlying foundations upon which the game engine draws – in just seven weeks. And all this had to be written from scratch because Lionhead games will run at 800x600 resolution in true colour (as opposed to SVGA).

The latest addition to the team is 21-year-old Demis Hassabis, Lionhead's resident Young Einstein. Though claiming to have done no work for his Finals, Demis graduated earlier in the year from Cambridge with a Double First in Computer Science. As an Under-13, he was the world's highest-rated young chess player. In August, at the Mind Games Olympiad at London's Royal Festival Hall, he also won five silver medals and a bronze for England, finishing second overall in the tournament. In typical Demis fashion though, he was mightily disappointed with his result: "Next year I'm going to win."

Peter met Demis when he entered a design-a-game competition in *Amiga Power* magazine in 1990. A 14-year-old at the time, Demis knew he



(Above) Demis Hassabis, the Young Einstein of Lionhead. (Below) Peter (on the left) and yours truly in Tamagotchi frenzy.



"What's this? I thought. I'd never ever been asked to make sure I arrived at work LATE before."



(Top) Oh oh, looks like Demis has hit a problem... (Above) The Lionhead posse settle down for yet another late night session.

couldn't accept the first prize – a job at Bullfrog. He'd only entered the competition to meet Peter Molyneux. As a result, the two designed and wrote *Theme Park*, a game that has now sold more than three million copies.

Imagine if you can a cross between Mowgli and Gollum... that's Demis. He has boundless enthusiasm for anything and everything – especially games and Liverpool FC. When bugs appear in his coding, he leaps from his seat, ranting and steaming: "What the...? Why isn't it working? Load of shite! This is C++ bollocks. It's crap." Although blessed with a razor-sharp intellect, Demis is often petulant and easily teased. Peter, an incorrigible wind-up merchant, can't resist laying into him just to watch the sparks fly.

Among the *Terra Firma* CDs and chilli crisp packets, Demis' desk is littered with books including *Maths For Engineers And Scientists*, *Engineering Mechanics: Dynamics and Artificial Life 2*. He is building a 'real physics' engine for the game world. The idea is this: say a car blows up in the game, a fragment of metal crashes through a nearby window; the window shatters; a shard of glass flies off towards a tree and hits a leaf which then flutters gently down to the ground. Demis' engine will give this kind of real physical property to objects in the game. How? I can't even begin to imagine...

To the great embarrassment of most of the company, this month saw Tamagotchi fever hit Lionhead. During a trip down Tottenham Court Road, I'd bought a digital fish. A gift for a friend's son... honestly! But I made the mistake of opening the blisterpack and setting the damn thing going. The egg hatched and the resultant tadpole started crapping all over the screen. When my two-day-old pet (now a fish) arrived at the office and started bleeping every half-hour, everyone sighed pathetically at the sad Tamagotchi nerd in

the corner. Peter, however, was fascinated by this behaviour: "A Tamagotchi! Where did you get it? I'll buy it off you – I'll give you 50 quid for it!"

Next day, he'd managed to blag one for himself and the race was on. Convinced that Peter could never shoulder the responsibility of raising a Tamagotchi, I proposed a £10 bet between us. For the next few days the office became a virtual playroom as the Tamagotchis beeped for attention.

At one point, Peter even resorted to espionage. My 12-year-old son and his mates were working their way through *Dungeon Keeper*. Although they'd managed to reach level ten, a lost game-save meant they had to return to level five. Ben e-mailed Peter to ask if there was a cheat to zip them up to level ten. Peter agreed to offer the cheat on one condition – my son must steal my Tamagotchi and leave it in a remote corner of the house to die.

Luckily, the heinous plot was rumbled just in time. After three days I was £10 richer. Two days later I went out in the evening and forgot to take my fish. It starved to death.

But at least sanity had returned to the Lionhead office...

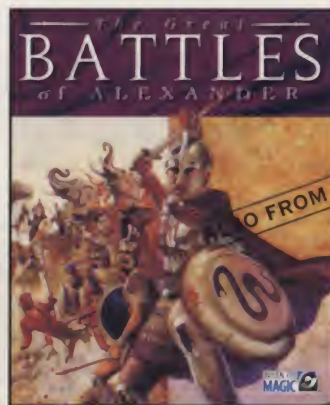
Co-founder of Games Workshop, author of *Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks*, game designer and columnist for the *Daily Telegraph*, Steve Jackson is now a director of start-up Lionhead. **Z**



HE WAGED WAR,
CHANGED THE FACE OF EUROPE
AND GOT A PAT ON THE BACK
WHEN HE GOT HOME.



THE GREAT BATTLES OF JULIUS CAESAR.
I CAME, I SAW, I CONQUERED.



AVAILABLE MARCH FOR WINDOWS 95 CD-ROM. www.imagicgames.co.uk

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Review ZONE

This month...

It's cold and wet. Aqua are back in the charts. All the big January releases have slipped 'til the spring. But it's not all bad news - there are one or two gaming gems out there if you bother to look hard enough, maintains Jeremy Wells.



JANUARY IS TYPICALLY A QUIET TIME OF THE YEAR FOR EXCITING AND WORTHY NEW releases in any medium - even the normally verbose Barry Norman looked quite lost for words when I caught *Film 98* last Saturday (presumably he was forced to sit and watch telly all week). Meanwhile, a glut of new material from more accomplished artistes has meant that those purveyors of spurious euro-pop, Aqua, have once more managed to sneak into the charts. Similarly, we were making ready to endure the usual post-Christmas avalanche of mediocrity as far as new games are concerned. If it's January, it must be RPGs, strategy games and flight sims.

When we were planning this issue in early January, things looked bleak. The late arrival of the *Quake II* engine has meant that *SiN*, *Daikatana* and *Duke Nukem 4 Ever* have slipped until May, or even as far off as autumn, as the respective developers struggle to implement the new code. Quite what Blizzard's excuse as far as *StarCraft* is concerned is anyone's guess. It was originally due for release towards the end of last year and yet we're still waiting for some reviewable code. Let's just hope it's worth the wait.

It seemed that no one was releasing any new software until the spring. But then pretty much out of the blue came *Warhammer: Dark Omen*. We'd been following its progress for some time, but the first game in the series had persuaded us to be both wary and cautiously optimistic. However, after a week's intense single-player and network play, we were more than a little pleasantly surprised. It may not have the immediacy of *C&C* or *Total Annihilation*, but once you've toiled through the first few levels you'll discover that not only is *Dark Omen* very playable, but the 3D rotational engine is quite superb. On a technical level it's superior to Bungee's *Myth*, although the office is currently split as to which is the better game. Play the EXCLUSIVE demo on this month's CD and decide for yourself. Another surprise this month was *Fallout*, Interplay's post-apocalyptic RPG. Again, it was initially greeted with the same enthusiasm we normally reserve for flight sim add-on packs, but it actually turned out to be extremely deep, intense and a lot of fun. Let's just hope the popular press don't diss it for its 'adult' content.

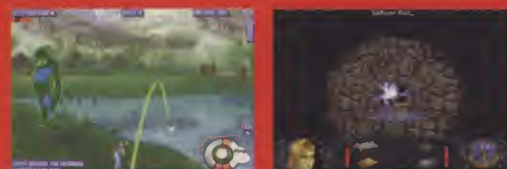
The previews in this month's issue indicate that as well as the numerous first-person shoot 'em ups due for release in the spring (don't forget that's when *Unreal*, *Half-Life*, *Star Trek: First Contact* and the *Jedi Knight* add-on pack are also due), we've got the lush *Incoming!* from Rage, a revamped *Dune* from Westwood and the mega-selling PlayStation hit *Final Fantasy VII* to look forward to. But until then, wrap up warm and bury your head in an RPG until the spring. **Z**



Dark Omen (above right) and *Fallout* (above) have helped us while away the long winter evenings.

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Scoring system

90+ CLASSIC



The highest accolade a game can attain. Not only is it innovative and highly original, but it's extremely playable and has masses of long-term appeal. Games that receive the 'Classic' award should be seen as a benchmark with which to compare other games of the same genre.

80-89 RECOMMENDED



An excellent game that simply lacks that certain something to make it a gaming classic. It may not be necessarily highly original, but it contains some new ideas and variations that add to the genre and are well implemented. Well worth checking out.

70-79

If a game scores within this bracket it's good, but not good enough to be recommended. It's not exactly original and somebody's probably done it better already, but it's still playable all the same. Basically, it's worth shelling out for, especially if you're a big fan of the genre, but don't expect anything innovative. Whatever you do, don't discount games just because they don't quite hit the Recommended mark!

50-69

Games that fall into this bracket are distinctly average and don't really offer anything new. There's nothing much wrong with these titles, but then there's nothing much to recommend them either. They're just average. Okay. Not bad. Alright. We've seen it all before. A lot better on budget. You get the picture.

40-49

Okay, so you're not really going to buy this, are you? We'd advise you not to. It's below average, it's not very playable, you'll probably be disappointed. It had a few nice ideas, but they were badly executed. Give it a miss.

21-39

Oh dear. This should never have got past the ideas stage. It offers absolutely nothing new to the genre, is very limited in terms of gameplay, frustrating to play and ultimately a complete waste of money. Avoid disappointment. Avoid this game.

20 AND BELOW PANTS

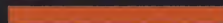


Absolutely bloody awful. Unplayable, due to bad design or bugged code. Crap with a capital 'C'. Naff with a capital 'N'. Do not buy this game, it will ruin your life and all those who come into contact with it. It doesn't get much worse than this. Have we made ourselves clear?

In Perspective

This is designed as a purely visual guide to how games of a similar style compare. The bars do not relate to previous review scores, they are simply an indication of how the reviewer feels about the products on a sliding scale.

Game 1



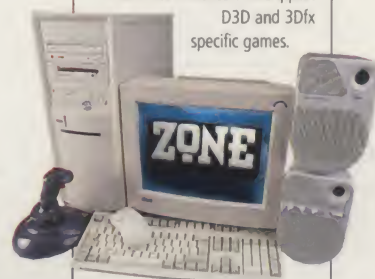
Game 2



THE BENCHMARK PC

At PC Zone all games are played and tested on a DAN Technology Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM, a 2Mb graphics card and a quad-speed CD-ROM drive.

We also use Maxi Gamer 3Dfx cards for releases that support D3D and 3Dfx specific games.



PC Zone use Dan PCs exclusively 'cos they're absolutely fab. If you want any more info on Dan machines, you can call them on:

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Personal Computers
The People's Choice

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LISTEN UP!

You know that you're gonna need a 3D accelerator card. We recommend the Maxi Gamer 3Dfx, not only because it's a good card, but also because at under £100 it represents excellent value for money. It allows you to run the best titles in glorious hi-res, mixes in the most fabulous effects and turns your PC into a red-hot games machine.

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THANKS THIS ISSUE TO:

Lidia @ Eidos
Sam @ SCI
PC Zone Benelux
Steve @ Gremlin
John 'Lucky Bastard' Davison @ EGM

Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at launchtime when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff.



◀ F-22 Air Dominance Fighter
NBA Live 98
Fallout
Quake II
Age Of Empires

Crap games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "Please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things.



◀ Adidas Power Soccer
Speed Boat Attack
AHX-1
Warheads
Monopoly: Star Wars Edition



Warhammer: Dark Omen



Deploying your armies correctly is the key to your campaign being successful.

He ambles along without direction, moans about nothing in particular and smells like a vat of rotting cabbages. It can only be **Richie Shoemaker** rising from his crypt.



HOSE OF YOU WHO REMEMBER *Shadow Of The Horned Rat* (which for the uninitiated was the first game to be based on Games Workshop's lead miniature paint 'em up) will no doubt recall having mixed feelings over its quality. On one hand we had a real-time strategy game with innovative 3D graphics and an involving storyline; on the other, a control method as fiddly as drinking beer from a thimble. It was also incessantly frustrating because missions had to be replayed over and over again – not for enjoyment you understand, but because the game was too friggin' hard.

So perhaps it's understandable that the thought of reviewing *Dark Omen* filled me with nervous anticipation. Thankfully my fears were largely unfounded, because the developers have taken all the best features of *SOTHR* and enhanced them, while also cutting out the crap that got in the way – which leaves us with a lean, mean, fantasy fighting machine... well, sort of.

Set a while after the first game, *Dark Omen* sees you reprising the role of Morgan Bernhardt, the mercenary leader of the Grudgebringers. This time you're up against undead soldiers and goblins: two very different enemies that require different strategies to win. The storyline is carried along admirably by the main characters chewing the fat in comic-style windows; these scenes do drag on, but there's the odd animated cut-scene to spice things up. The first few missions are fairly simple: you start with one unit each of infantry, cavalry, archers and a cannon.



Here's where you hire reinforcements, tool up on magical items and take a well-earned break.

Thankfully it isn't long before you enlist the help of a wizard, who looks like a cross between Roy Wood and Ginger Spice. You have to take good care of your magicians because their magic really does come in handy (obviously). The other commanders and units you come across are usually happy to join in the battles, especially if you help them out; they may even stick around for the duration, although this will usually take you out of your way and could affect the final battle.

The fighting is handled in a similar fashion to the previous game: you select a unit by simply clicking on its banner and then either click on the map to move it, or on an enemy unit to attack. Naturally, archers, cannons and wizards warrant slightly different attention, but the control method is incredibly simple to use – you don't even have to have units on screen to direct them. Although it does get easier, wheeling the units around is a bit fiddly at first because the cursor keeps disappearing, although I consoled myself with the fact that getting a troop of cavalry to turn on their feet is probably just as tricky in real life.

The screenshots should make it clear that owners of 3D cards are in for a glorious treat. The landscapes look quite stunning, and moving around them is as mysteriously easy as finding your way home after ten pints of lager. Without hardware acceleration, the graphics are a bit messy, although I have to confess that I played the game for more than four hours before realising I'd turned 3D acceleration off – which just shows how engrossed I was. To be honest, the graphical representations for the various units seem a little disappointing, especially after *Myth*. But most of the time you'll be directing the action far above any perspective *Myth* can handle, and *Myth* doesn't have cool units like cavalry, chariots or cannons. However, it's annoying that you can't make use of the buildings on the various maps. You can hide behind them and even flatten some of them, but it would've



been soooooo cool to plant a cannon on some battlements and watch your foe blindly walk into a couple of fat fiery balls of metal.

Unfortunately, *Dark Omen* disappoints in exactly the same department as *SOTHR*. To progress to the later missions you can't afford to lose a single unit. Even if you do manage to pick up all the available cash, you still don't seem to have enough to keep reinforcing your units for the battles that lie ahead. Most of the missions

"Most of the time you'll be directing the action far above any perspective Myth can handle."

have their difficulty set just right, but a couple are virtually impossible unless you have a full complement of men, and even then casualties will invariably be high. This is a real shame, because most of the missions are varied and very well designed. If you can forgive this as a minor flaw, or if you actually enjoy a serious challenge, there should be nothing to stop you snapping up a copy. In light of all the other strategy games out there, *Dark Omen* still remains highly original, and if you want something that's going to keep you occupied for a good long time, this is the one to go for. **2**



(Above) Here your cavalry prepare to charge an enemy skullthrower – look out for the skeleton archers behind you who are trying to stop you. (Right) Two of the early missions and your first taste of the devastating effects of battle magic. Nice.

In Perspective

Sick of all the C&C clones, and want something a bit different from *Myth*? Then rush out and buy this now. Be warned though: you may end up tearing your hair out over some of the levels, as anyone who's played its predecessor will already know.

Warhammer: Dark Omen

Warhammer: SOTHR

Myth: The Fallen Lords

WarCraft 2

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P120 minimum

Graphics: 2Mb SVGA
(3D card recommended)

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard



Score

Difficult, yes, but persevere and you'll find *Dark Omen* highly rewarding.

85

Price: £39.99

Release date: March

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442

Website: www.ea.com

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

F/A-18 Korea



It's staggeringly complex, has a lethal capacity for subtle attacks on its enemies and is overshadowed by more complex and user-friendly models. It's Paul Presley's social life. No wonder he plays so many games.

P

OPULAR FUTUROLOGY HAS IT THAT THE air wars of the future will no longer be fought by men but by remotely-piloted machines (although there will still be men operating those controls, so popular futurology

had better learn to clarify itself before it pokes its head round my way again). If that is indeed the case and the next time America invades... er, 'polices' some third-world country with large oil reserves, it's with the help of an elite team of specky geekoids sitting in their bedrooms, connected to the world's defence network by a 28.8 modem, I can think of no better training tool than *F/A-18 Korea*. It's that realistic.

I remember when...

This high level of realism is probably due to the fact that the actual F/A-18 Hornet aircraft is now getting on a bit and subsequently has a lot of features that just don't exist in modern jet fighters. For instance, the radar is a huge and cumbersome beast with all sorts of scanning modes and adjustable options – none of your computerised, auto-targeting, information-displaying F-22-style gizmos here. You have to work at detecting other aircraft, and it's probably this level of effort that makes the game feel so very real. I'm sure that every cockpit button in *F-22 ADF* is accurate to the last millimetre, it's just that *F/A-18 Korea* makes you aware of how hard a pilot's job really is.

Luckily, the game's designers have thoughtfully included a very good manual. Written by an ex-US Marine Corps F/A-18 pilot, it takes you through the detailed ins and outs of Hornet operation with remarkable clarity and user-friendliness. It's one of the best manuals I've seen since *Falcon 3.0* and details



"The detailed editor allows you to create simple one-plane joyrides or huge multi-aircraft tactical headaches."



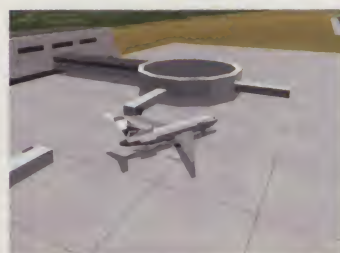
everything from take-off and landing procedures to advanced air-to-air combat manoeuvres. It works in conjunction with a series of training missions that, while not as numerous and comprehensive as *F-22 ADF*s, combine to give you a feeling of confidence when you finally set off on a proper mission.

Pull up. Pull up! Pull up, dammit!

There's yet another area of flight sim life that *F/A-18 Korea* opens up to you – that of the rapidly converging flight model. Most of today's modern fighter jets are now designed with ease of use as a main criteria and as a result, there seems to be very little difference in the way certain planes handle. The F/A-18, however, is a heavy, sluggish bird and the developers have done a fine job of making you aware of this. It also comes as something of a welcome relief after having been deluged with an army of flight sims where flying the actual plane can seem almost too easy to be real. As such, the game feels more challenging and more rewarding to play.

Here's a war I made earlier

Before I start putting a downer on this unashamed love-in, I'll just mention the mission editor. It's been a long time since I've played a flight sim that allows you to create your own missions and scenarios from scratch (providing you base them in Korea, of course) and I'm now beginning to realise what I've



(Left) The Yanks get missile-laden jet fighters, the Russians ancient prop planes. (Above) Bad flight with Delta? Revenge is now yours.



been missing. The editor is both easy to use and staggeringly detailed, allowing you to create simple one-plane joyrides or huge multi-aircraft tactical headaches without getting frustrated by the interface. There's one exception to this in that there are no cut and paste commands for the quick creation of identical flights, and this can be a pain as you add more and more patrols. But on the whole, this is first-rate stuff – it even put me in mind of the late, great *Stunt Island*, albeit without the 'comedy' factor.

But it scores less than F-22 ADF...

And here's why. Despite having a lot to recommend it, a few questionable areas remain. For one, the mission structure. While the aforementioned editor retains some level of long-term interest, the actual missions feel very self-contained. Again, just as with *F-22 ADF*, there's no ongoing campaign framework to deal with, so every time you take off it's as if you're starting off in a completely new world.

And because you can feel the mission editor at work in each mission, that 'real-world' impression is lost. Games like *F-22 ADF* and *Joint Strike Fighter* manage to create an illusion where you feel like you're just a small part of a 'living world'. In *F/A-18 Korea*, however, you are the centre of attention, which lessens the overall atmosphere and reminds you that you're playing a game, nothing more. And when you consider how staggeringly detailed the rest of the simulation is, it only adds to the disappointment.

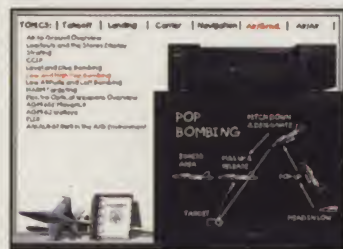
I also have a slight quibble about the graphics. For the most part they're great, and low-powered machine owners

(Far left) Sure, it looks big there – just wait till you try landing on it. (Left) The most common sight for the majority of flight sim buffs.

will be pleased to hear that if you don't turn the 3Dfx options on, this game will actually work on your PC. And while the graphics aren't up to the quality of *F-22 ADF* (or *JSF* either, for that matter), they're still a big improvement on the likes of *A-10 Cuba!* or *SU-27 Flanker*. However, designers Graphic Simulations have fallen into the age-old trap of lavishing all the detail on the craft and somewhat ignoring the other objects. For instance, some of the buildings are almost laughable in their plainness, although the terrain textures are particularly nice and the lack of too much detail does tend to keep things moving along smoothly. You can sort of tell this used to be a Macintosh game though, and the next title would be well advised to really go to town with the accelerator cards – an engine of this quality combined with the graphics of DID would indeed be a joy to behold.

Cleared to land

Basically then, the reason why *F/A-18 Korea* doesn't score as highly as *F-22 ADF* is that while the simulation of the plane is in most ways better than DID's, at the end of the day, the overall game itself is rather disappointing. If I happened to be one of the specy geekoids mentioned at the beginning, training for a real war, the scores would probably have been reversed. But I'm not. I'm a specy geekoid playing a game. And in my book, that's what really counts. ②



(Above) I sometimes think designers have only one reason for putting bridges in flight sims. (Top right) What worries me most here is that the US Navy still appear to use DOSShell (It's more reliable than Windows – Ed). (Above right) How much do you reckon Sony paid for that product placement then?

In Perspective

In many ways, *F/A-18 Korea* is a more realistic sim than *F-22 ADF*. However, DID's behemoth manages to give the impression that it's a more complete world. Neither game has a decent campaign system though (or 'yet' in *F-22's* case), which is where *JSF* manages to score a few hits.

F/A-18 Korea

F-22 ADF

Joint Strike Fighter

Watching that 'bomb through the window' video on CNN

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P90

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Joystick, flightstick, keyboard, mouse



Score

I think I'm now qualified to fight in a real war.



Price: £29.99

Release date: February

Publisher: Empire Interactive

Telephone: 0181 343 7337

Website: www.empire.co.uk

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Personal Computers

The People's
Choice

come fry with me



HIGH-REALISM STRIKE FIGHTER

FA-18

KOREA

follows on from the highly successful and ultra realistic FA/18 Hornet and takes the term simulation to the extreme. With the excellent gameplay and exceptional realism of Hornet, Korea also brings with it outstanding graphics.

KEY FEATURES:

- Three theatres of operation, all featuring rolling 3D terrain and atmospheric effects.
- Accurate flight dynamics closely simulate the Navy and marine strike fighter aircraft.
- Exceptionally detailed avionics are closely modelled to provide accurate reproductions of the FA/18 Korea flight systems.
- Unique graphic engine delivers fast and smooth in-game graphics, even on an unaccelerated PC.
- Superior 3D graphics capabilities including Native 3Dfx Glide support for the finest accelerated 3D graphic effects available.



3Dfx Screen shot



For product information and availability, check out our web page at: www.empire.co.uk



SIMULATION

- European version includes an extra 18 missions which are not included in the US version.
- Advanced mission editor provides design control over all available units within the Korean theatre.
- Connect up to 4 computers via network for multiple player action. Includes 6 network missions designed to enhance multi-player play.
- Huge arsenal includes B-57 Tactical Nuke.
- Standard product includes full Pilot's Manual written by a former Marine 'Strike-U' instructor and FA/18 Hornet pilot.
- New aircraft types and anti-aircraft units, including F-14D Tomcat, B2 Spirit, Patriot, Hawk and various SA-2 variants.
- Exclusive multimedia training classroom provides over 90 minutes of flight combat instruction. Includes 6 training missions in scenic Hawaii.
- New network theatre set in Fallon, Nevada.
- Tested by Combat Pilots.



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WINDOWS '95/NT 4.0, 3Dfx® GRAPHICS REQUIRE 3Dfx-BASED GRAPHICS ACCELERATOR.

empire
INTERACTIVE

Fallout



When two tribes go to war, one is all that you can score. Interplay's *Fallout*, on the other hand, has managed to score considerably better than that. Peering nervously at the Geiger counter is **Charlie Brooker.**



T

HERE ARE TWO WAYS OF LOOKING AT THE continued proliferation of nuclear arms. Number one: as long as such weapons exist, the prospect of a nuclear war simply cannot be ruled out; inevitably, it'll happen sooner or later. One day the skies will fill with fire, and our flabby carcasses are going to fry like pigs on a spit-roast. The oceans will boil, our cities will burn, and Planet Earth will be reduced to an incinerated pellet of lifeless radioactive carbon. It'll be almost as harrowing as an *EastEnders* Christmas special. Almost.

That's viewpoint number one. Viewpoint number two is a little more cheery. It runs like this: sod it, we all have to die some time. Let's try not to think about it. Fancy a pint?

"It looks a bit like Rotherham – except it's prettier."

If you favour viewpoint number one, *Fallout* will probably seem like a documentary from the future. The game is set in a brutal and anarchic post-nuclear wasteland, populated by mutants, bandits, radioactive zombies, gigantic deformed animals, and gun-toting fascist cops. It looks a bit like Rotherham – except *Fallout* is prettier. Indeed, *Fallout* is very pretty – assuming you find the sight of bloodied chunks of human flesh arcing through the air aesthetically pleasing,

that is. But before we go into *that*, let's describe the darned thing first, shall we?

We'll all go together when we go

It's a role-playing game. A full-on trad-rock RPG complete with character stats, experience points, armour classes, inventories, and turn-based combat. But before you start vomiting, listen up: *it's really good fun – honest*. For one thing, healthy Tolkien-o-phobics have nothing to fear from *Fallout*; there isn't an orc or a goblin in sight: this is, after all, an exercise in gritty post-apocalyptic sci-fi. Second, it's very much an *adult* game. Aside from the sobering subject matter, there's a smattering of profane language, lashings of grisly unpleasantness, and even a touching sequence in which the lead character gets to sleep with a prostitute. Again, anyone from Rotherham will feel right at home.



No, they're not the highlights from the latest 'Come to sunny Rotherham' brochure, they're just pics of *Fallout*'s cityscape, local amenities and welcoming committee.

Bombs in streets = bums on seats

The bomb... with its deadly aplomb, and the cloud... like a mushrooming shroud, and the folk... as they go up in smoke – that's entertainment. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, wholly terrifying they may be, but nuclear weapons have an up side – they've kept the movie industry busy for years. Heartening, isn't it? There now follows a brief rundown of some of our favourite apoc-o-licious motion pictures. Duck and cover...

MIRACLE MILE

Sadly neglected film in which a dweeby musician accidentally gets wind of an imminent nuclear attack on Los Angeles. Highlights include the mindless, panic-stricken public rioting that occurs moments before the blast, and an uncompromisingly downbeat ending. Viewing hint: keep some Prozac close to hand.

THREADS

Reece Dinsdale starred in this fictional account of an all-out nuclear attack on Sheffield – a classic TV movie designed to induce lifelong neurosis in impressionable children. Easily the most terrifying thing the BBC had screened prior to the genesis of *Pets Win Prizes*.

THE DAY AFTER

US TV's answer to *Threads* was blessed by a far larger budget – all the better to scare us with. Classic scene: a galloping white horse vaporises as the bomb explodes. More or less everybody in the cast dies

in an unpleasant manner. A laugh-a-minute carnival of zany cartoon slapstick it is not.

CAFÉ FLESH

Obscure American 'arthouse' flick, set in – hey, you guessed it – a post-apocalyptic wilderness. A pre-credit sequence explains that following the war, 99 per cent of the population are *allergic* to sexual intercourse. The remaining 1 per cent are legally obliged to 'do it' in front of everybody else. Moody performances, inventive costume design and bizarre choreography all conspire to give the impression that we are witnessing a piece of intelligent highbrow cinema – until strings of *genuine semen* begin soaring through the air like mayonnaise at a food fight, prompting the realisation that *Café Flesh* is nothing more than an incredibly filthy pornographic film.

WARGAMES

Teenage hacker Matthew Broderick digitally burgles a US military supercomputer and almost triggers World War III. These days he'd probably be too busy downloading Internet smut to bother with such geeky concerns. Now that's progress.

WHEN THE WIND BLOWS

Raymond Briggs followed up his thoroughly charming children's books *Fungus The Bogeyman* and *Father Christmas* with a relentlessly unpleasant tale of two loveable pensioners dying a cruel, lingering death in the aftermath of an atomic exchange. The subsequent strip artwork was adapted into an animated film so horrible it could traumatise a rock.

But the very best thing about the game is its inherent non-linearity. Although it does have a primary, 'proper' quest – actually, there's more than one, but we don't want to spoil it – *Fallout* actively encourages the player to have full control of his/her own destiny. Rather than being led by the nose through a rigidly-defined storyline, you explore the irradiated wastes at your leisure. Not that your actions don't have direct consequences of course: if you visit a township and attack someone's mother with a sledgehammer (just one of the myriad possibilities in the charming world of *Fallout*), they won't exactly welcome you with open arms the next time you show up. It's one of those rare things: an absorbing, believable, 'virtual' environment in which, it seems, anything is possible.

All suffused with an incandescent glow

Anyone who thinks turn-based combat is a crashing bore should give *Fallout* a spin. It may have a slower pace than the endless visceral skirmishes that make up *Quake II*, but that doesn't make it any less cathartic when a bad guy gets his lungs blown out. Those who've succumbed to the insanelly addictive *X-COM* series in the past will be comfortable with *Fallout* – the player's gnawed fingernails stand in silent testimony to the taut compelling nature of the combat. It also has the added appeal of bodypart-specific targeted shots (you can go around shooting people in the testicles, for example). There isn't an efficient way of describing how moreish it can be: just think about those Government information films warning of the dangers of drug abuse, and you're on the right track. And, since the game is so open-ended, it could conceivably

go on for ever. It's a dangerous prospect for those of you with relationships on the go: book that Relate appointment now.

Criticisms? Well, some of the non-player characters who join your party are lacking in the 'smarts' department – they have a habit of standing in your line of fire and, whatever else you do, *don't* give any of them a rapid-fire automatic weapon, because they'll use it with the carefree abandon of a child blasting at cats with a water pistol. Also, we ran into a few 'glitches' in the dialogue – dead characters were sometimes referred to in the present tense. But these are quibbles. Give it a chance, and you'll discover that *Fallout* is a rewarding RPG that will keep you entertained for hours. Think of it as the silver lining in the mushroom cloud. ☺



If you have an allergy to Tolkien-esque orcs and goblins, you'll be perfectly safe here – unless you're prone to picking up those annoying and deadly nuclear infections.

In Perspective

Fallout is one of the best role-playing games we've seen for ages, and can even hold its own against the likes of *Ultima VII*. Many moons ago we reviewed a game called *Burntime*, which had an extremely similar theme, but was basically crap. We've also compared *Fallout* to *Shadowrun*, a similarly gritty Super Nintendo 'cyberpunk' RPG, which to this day remains one of News Ed Mallo's all-time favourite titles.

Fallout

Ultima VII

Burntime

Albion

Shadowrun (SNES)

A real nuclear war

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P90

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Score

It's the end of the world as we know it – and it feels fine.

91

Price: £TBC

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Interplay

Telephone: 01628 423666

Website: www.interplay.com

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter: Balance Of Power

Although *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* was a remarkable *Star Wars* product, it was slightly marred by a lack of any real single-player 'fun'. John Davison explains why you have to lay out a bit more cash to get the most out of it.



HERE'S NO ARGUMENT ABOUT IT: *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter: Balance Of Power* is what *X Vs TIE* should have been in the first place. The original game was a gorgeous space opera (as publishers are wont to call them), albeit lacking somewhat in the 'opera' department. By this, I don't mean big fat singing Italians (although that's something for George to consider for the new trilogy), but rather the absence of the story elements that were so well executed in its predecessors. Let's face it, *X Vs TIE* was a bit boring. The graphics were fabulous, the music unsurpassed, the controls better than you'd find in any other space combat game... but the gameplay was yawny, dull, single-mission based combat. The multi-player stuff was fun, but at no point did the game ever give you a sense of achievement.

Together we can rule the galaxy...

So, as with its predecessors, we have an add-on disc. A predictable move by LucasArts, but when you look more closely, *Balance Of Power* is almost an admission of guilt. What have we here? Two story-driven campaigns? 3D support? Cut-scenes? The B-Wing Fighter and Super Star Destroyers? Surely... surely not all the things we should have been given in the original release?

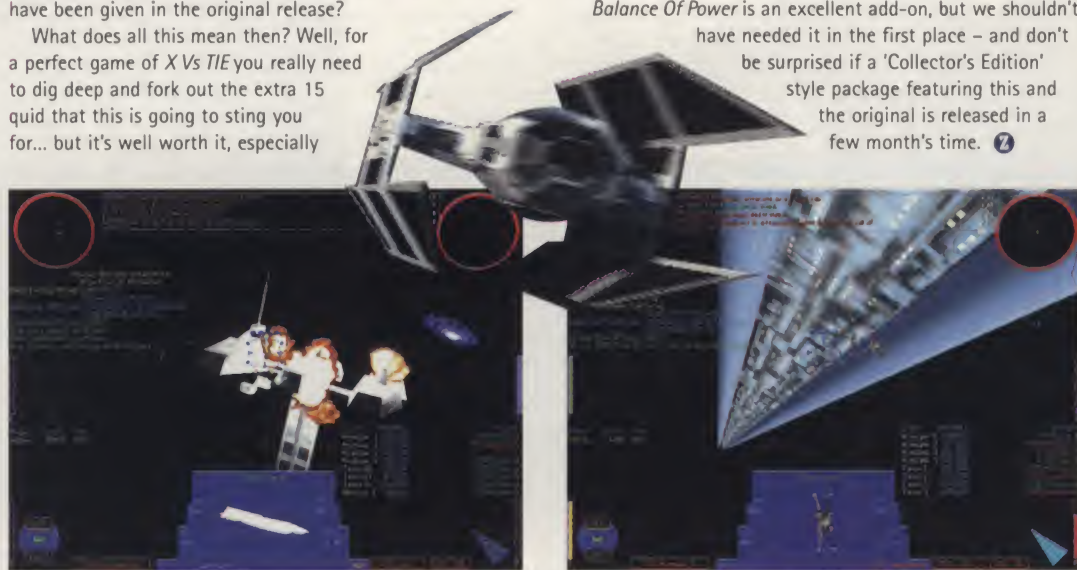
What does all this mean then? Well, for a perfect game of *X Vs TIE* you really need to dig deep and fork out the extra 15 quid that this is going to sting you for... but it's well worth it, especially



if you were fanatical about the original *X-Wing* or *TIE Fighter*. And that should really be all of you. I don't care what the people here (and Chris in particular) say: the *Wing Commander* games suck and the *X-Wing* engine rocks.

So what do you get exactly? Well, the best bit is obviously the new 'proper' campaign – something that was sorely missing from *X Vs TIE*. The campaign can be played from either side and breaks you in fairly gently before hitting you with some full-on, dead-hard, mean muthalover levels that'll have you swearing your head off. Fancy taking out a Star Destroyer in a Z95 Headhunter with no support? Thought you might. The campaign can also be played as a multi-player game for added fun – although if you don't fancy that there are some new battles and melees for you to try out as 'one off' punch-ups.

Balance Of Power is an excellent add-on, but we shouldn't have needed it in the first place – and don't be surprised if a 'Collector's Edition' style package featuring this and the original is released in a few month's time. **Z**



(Left) Network campaign missions are the most fun, as they let you take out the major targets as part of a team effort. (Right) One of the high points of the game is that you can take on a Super Star Destroyer. These things are big... really big.

In Perspective

As far as the history of add-ons for *Star Wars* combat sims go, *Balance Of Power* is one of the most enjoyable yet. We've put all the packages together; the Collector's editions of *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* both threw in their appropriate add-ons, and despite the minor expense, when you bundle *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* with *Balance Of Power*, it actually fares very well.

X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter:
Balance Of Power

X-Wing Collector's CD

TIE Fighter Collector's CD

Teck Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: Pentium

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Joystick, flightstick



Score

What *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* should have been all along.



Price: £14.95

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Lucas Arts/Virgin

Telephone: 0171 368 2255

Website: www.lucasarts.com



The People's
Choice

Grand Theft Auto is so good, it won
a certificate before it was even released.



Imagine how proud we felt when the British Board of Film Classification awarded us the prestigious '18 Certificate'. It was indeed a great honour for Grand Theft Auto to have followed in the footsteps of such cinematic greats as 'Reservoir Dogs', 'Death Race 2000' and 'Crash'.

Yet still, the plaudits kept a-comin'. PC Gamer gave it 92% and C&VG gave it 5 out of 5, as did Sky Magazine. Escape magazine wrote, "Grand Theft Auto is depraved, disgusting, putrid and repellent. 6 out of 6!" confirming the truism that adults really do have all the fun. Sorry kids. Grow up and see what you're missing.

GRAND THEFT AUTO ^{★★★} ¹⁸
★★★
IT'S CRIMINAL NOT TO



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Battlespire

Chris Anderson will take gameplay over graphics any time. *Battlespire* argues its case for the former.

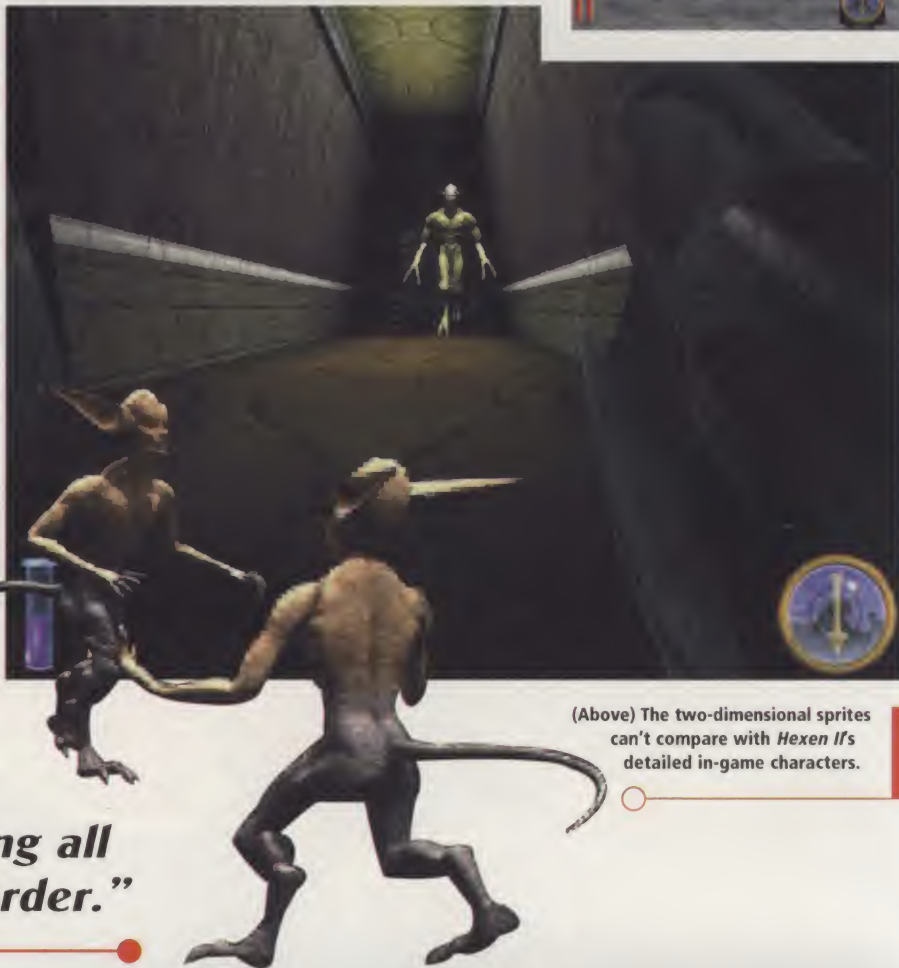
T

HIS IS THE LATEST GAME TO EMERGE from Bethesda, creators of *Daggerfall*. Bethesda are renowned for two things: first, their ability to create massive game environments and enchanting storylines, and second, their apparent inability to keep up with the times in a technological sense. This isn't to say that the game engine for *Battlespire* is particularly lacking in any way, but the graphics and general presentation fall way below acceptable standards for a game of this type.

This was precisely the problem I had with *Daggerfall*. When it came out two years ago it looked dated and primitive, and in my opinion it couldn't hold a candle to *Ultima Underworld* (or any of the *Ultima* games for that matter). If bad presentation was unacceptable then, it's utterly unforgivable now, considering that almost every game that comes into the office looks pretty smart thanks to the wonders of 3D acceleration.

"There's a curious satisfaction to be gleaned from completing all the tasks in the right order."

You can probably tell from the screenshots that Bethesda, in their infinite wisdom, have decided to give 3Dfx and co a wide berth. The explanation for this madness? Well, it seems that Bethesda's own proprietary game engine (Xngine), which they used for both *Future Shock* (a futuristic *Doom* clone) and later *Daggerfall*, has compatibility problems with various 3D cards. To address these problems, Bethesda would have had to modify Xngine to the extent that the game would have slipped quite considerably and missed its projected release date by some margin. Why then, did they use Xngine at all? It's not a bad game engine by anyone's standards, but it's hardly revolutionary and indeed looks positively antiquated alongside the likes of *Quake II* or even *Jedi Knight*. What this all amounts to is a game with tacky environments and almost laughable sprites that will remind you of a number of old



(Above) The two-dimensional sprites can't compare with *Hexen II*'s detailed in-game characters.



Character creation

Before *Battlespire* begins you're given the chance to create your own character. Heed these words: you should take advantage of this opportunity, because if you start the game with any of the default characters you'll be roundly trounced at every turn. The first thing you need to do on the character creation screen is make all the spell effects critical weaknesses as this will give you lots of build points to play with. Choose Long Blade as a primary skill and Thaumaturgy as a major one, and make sure you've got spell restoration or you won't regenerate mana. Top spells: monster summoning and cure health. Don't say we never do nuthin' for ya.

(Above left) One false step and you're lava soup. (Above top) Choose the Mage character class and you get to cast flash ice spells like this one.



(Above left) Level one: activate switches to turn on these blue rays and then proceed to level two.
(Above) Combat is standard hack 'n' slash stuff.
(Left) This is a fireman. No, really.



the scene perfectly for the events which follow, said events involving much hacking at enemy flesh and casting of spells. And that's pretty much it.

Now I've got a problem. How do I explain why I spent ages playing this game? (I'm on level four and the levels are pretty big.) Strange though it may sound, the more you find out about the history of the game universe, the more you want to learn about it. This makes it worth going through the motions during each level because you know that when you get to the next one it'll be completely different, with its own characters and idiosyncrasies. Of course, this may not be enough for people who liked the open-ended gameplay of *Daggerfall* and *Arena*, or the utterly engrossing and unique gameplay of *Ultima Underworld*, but it'll do me nicely thank you very much. While it's not a classic by any stretch of the imagination, it offers a reasonable diversion for those of you who may have completed *Lands Of Lore 2* and are desperate for something to keep you happy until *Ultima IX* and *Lands Of Lore 3* appear later this year. **2**

titles you'd probably rather forget. Bethesda would no doubt argue at this point that you don't need lush terrain and 3D polygon characters to make a great game – after all, it's gameplay that counts at the end of the day. Oh, really? It had better be bloody good then!

Game on

In truth, *Battlespire* is a fairly competent action RPG. It's not a sequel to *Daggerfall*, a point that Bethesda have emphasised by creating a very different game experience. To start with, whereas you could pretty much do whatever you liked in *Daggerfall* (it was a completely open game environment), *Battlespire* is level-based. This makes it play like a sort of fantasy version of *Doom* – I can't compare it to *Quake* for obvious reasons. At the beginning of each level you'll find scrolls left behind by one of your ill-fated fantasy colleagues which give you hints on what you need to do to complete the level. This invariably involves killing every bast you come across before completing a few puzzles at the end.

However, this is a lot more fun than it sounds. The puzzles are all quite simple but nevertheless fairly logical, and there's a curious satisfaction to be gleaned from completing all the tasks in the right order. There are many scrolls to be found which give you information on various events and NPCs in the game world. These are particularly well written and set

Tech alert

Considering *Battlespire* looks like a game that should have been released two or three years ago, you'd think it would run fairly smoothly on a modest Pentium. Not so. In hi-res, it chugged along at an embarrassing pace on my P200 which has 16Mb of RAM. It's fine on a machine with 32Mb RAM though (I'm sure you've all got that!). So be warned: if you want to play this game with graphics that don't look completely shite, you need 32Mb RAM. 'Nuff said.



(Left) Don't kill these guys. Talk nicely to them and they'll fight on your side. (Middle) The Ice Man cometh. Well okay, Frost Man then. (Right) The landscapes might look okay when viewed at this size, but wait until you see them full-screen!

In Perspective

Battlespire isn't a traditional RPG. You can't buy and sell stuff. You don't talk to characters much and you can't freely explore your environment. Think of it as a sort of *Doom* clone with RPG stats. For this reason I've compared it to action RPGs, but it hasn't fared too well. It doesn't have the graphical polish of *Hexen II*, and even looks a bit grim alongside *ShadowCaster*, which is about four years old. It's better than *Daggerfall*, which doesn't have much to offer as either an RPG or an action game.

Battlespire

Hexen II

ShadowCaster

Daggerfall

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb (32Mb recommended)

Processor: P133

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard



Score

Dated, yet strangely endearing.

75

Price: ETBA

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Virgin Interactive

Telephone: 0171 368 2255

Website: www.bethsoft.com

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

Earth 2140



"I can't believe it's not Buddha," says Andy Martin, which is strange considering we gave him a real-time strategy game to review.

(Above and left) The sheer scale of the landscape will appeal to diehard strategy fans.

loads of big film-style introductions with big film-attempt soundtracks before the actual game begins. And once you've waded through all that, you then find that the graphics can't really pass muster on a 14-inch monitor. As an aside, it does throw in some sparkingly titled odd features, the best being the 'Virtual General' which plays the game on your command far more effectively than you could ever hope to do yourself.

Other side

Strategy fans will no doubt consider the idea of toying with *Earth 2140*, and I can't deny that a fair proportion of them will actually like it. For those reared on better however, the tiny visuals guarantee frustration, and too many missions go on and on simply because your army neglected to kill off a solitary robot soldier and consequently had to go looking for him on the other side of the landscape.

Just 20 quid

It's hard to put your finger on what makes *Earth 2140* ultimately disappointing – but for a mere 20 quid, the price is certainly in its favour. Essentially, it's like a 'tribute' game – something like 'I can't believe it's not *Command & Conquer*', but without the depth and quality to fascinate. Even the 20 additional multi-player missions can't detract from graphics that cause a headache, long-winded walking around doing nothing and a clumsy, heavily laboured plot. **Z**



Plenty of gratuitous OTT explosions, as you'd expect. At the same time they may isolate the strategy virgin.

In Perspective

It's not bad, but it's not good either. The story's recycled, it's got Terminators and ED-209s doing battle with each other, and it can get a tad boring. But it does require some considered tactics, fully supports network shenanigans, and is only £20.

Earth 2140

C&C: Red Alert

Age Of Empires

Beverly Hills 90210

Chelmsford 123

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

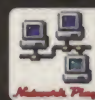
Processor: P90 and above

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster compatible sound card

Controls: Mouse

Note: Requires 30Mb hard disk space, dual-speed CD-ROM, DOS 6.x or Windows 95



Score

For 20 quid, you can't knock *Earth 2140* for value.

79

Price: £19.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Interplay

Telephone: 01628 423666

Website: www.interplay.com

dan
Personal Computer

The People's
Choice

Your kettle

'Whoopee!' you may all be crying, and yes, you have every right to do so if this is your kettle. But despite some great touches such as an easy interface and the ability to 'bookmark' and move quickly between your army on big landscapes, unlike say *C&C*, *Earth 2140* does tend to isolate the strategy game virgin. Graphically, it adheres to the usual misconception that everyone is prepared to sit through

THE JOURNEYMAN PROJECT® 3

LEGACY OF TIME™

"Once you've started to play it's very difficult to stop again" - Ultimate PC



86%

"The invention of time travel may eventually save humanity's future by reaching the world of the tragic mistakes of the

The next lost civilisation could be ours

past" - Dr. Elliot

Sinclair, inventor of the Pegasus Device

PC/MAC
CD-ROM



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The Journeyman Project 3: Legacy Of Time



Paul Presley once had a project. He wanted to build a 1:1 working scale model of an ICBM missile site out of matchsticks. He's still got the unfinished prototype under his staircase. Bless.



H, THE JOURNEYMAN PROJECT. I know – you haven't the faintest idea what it is.

That's not so surprising, as the previous two (I can barely remember the second, and the first is a complete blank) were victim to the old 'nice graphics, shame about the brain' syndrome and as such were instantly forgotten. Well, the bad news is we've proved that the old adage of 'ignore it and it'll go away' doesn't seem to work. The good news is it doesn't matter – *The Journeyman Project 3: Legacy Of Time* is actually pretty damn good.

The first point I should mention is that there's a very good adventure game buried

in here, not to mention a good learning curve as well. The opening section acts as a kind of prelude to the main story (although I won't spoil it for you here, and besides, I haven't got the room) and lets the player get used to the interface. It then carries through to the main adventure itself where the player has to jump around different time zones in order to recover the ancient legacy.

One area that I particularly like is the chameleon suit's



Meet the Journeyman gang

GAGE BLACKWOOD Agent 5

Lantern-jawed, all-American and rampantly homosexual, Gage is *Journeyman 3's* hero. Having starred in the two previous *Journeyman* games, nobody has the faintest idea who he is. Luckily though, he's portrayed by well-known American B-list actor, underwear model and amateur limbo dancer Dick Curving. Give him a few more good quality and descriptive words in this part.



MICHELLE VISARD Agent 3

She's a traitor. Boo. Hiss. Either that or she's deeply misunderstood. Whatever, Point is she's a woman and as such can't be trusted. Played by none other than the lovely Michele Scarabelli (previously seen as a lumpy-headed slave woman in TV's *Alien Nation* and before that in the seminal *Snake Eyes 2 – The Dangerous Game*, no doubt Agent 3 saves the day in the end, or gets killed, whatever. It's all good.



ability to take on different identities. Whenever you encounter someone, you can take an image of their likeness and morph into it. This allows you to then interact with various people in different ways, depending on the form you've currently adopted as your own. It's a really clever touch and makes for some very creative puzzles.

Take five, people

The graphics are improved too, although to be fair to the other games, this was always the area in which they shone anyway. Still, we're up to and beyond the *Myst/Riven* level here and they work well when superimposed with the FMV footage of actors. The FMV isn't the best technical quality I've ever seen, but in a way the slightly grainy feel works to the game's advantage because if the resolution were any clearer, the blue-screening would be more noticeable.

It also helps that your attention is drawn away from the technical side of things by some rather good quality acting, directing and editing. In these so-called 'interactive movies', the rush to sign up big-name stars often overtakes the need for a quality director behind the camera to keep things in check (witness for instance Christopher Walken in *Ripper* –



(Left) I'm not convinced Genghis Khan was all that hard. I mean, girlie name, poncey hat, silly moustache. I could take him. Probably. (Right) If the pots were really that big, how come Tony Robinson's *Time Team* only ever manage to find the tiniest shards?

position to the next – a sort of restricted-movement *Quake*.

I don't actually know why this does nothing for me; all I know is that I've never liked hotspots in adventure games.

If I can see something on the screen, I want to be able to interact with it, regardless of what

it is. If something is classed as

'scenery', all that happens

is a feeling of artificiality

is enforced. In the classic

text games of yore, if

something was mentioned

in the room description,

the author would make sure

there was a routine to deal

with a player's action towards it.

Even if it was just a simple, "The

oak tree is several thousand years old

and too large for you to eat," the player

could still type, "Put tree in mouth" if that

was an action he wanted to try. The 'look but don't

touch' ethos is just as frustrating in an adventure game

as it is in a Soho lap-dancing club. Or so I'm told.



"When you encounter someone, you can take an image of their likeness and morph into it."

a perfectly fine actor, but only when he's treated right). *Journeyman 3* keeps the scripting, dialogue (especially that of your robot sidekick which could easily have become very annoying, but instead actually manages to be amusing) and, most importantly, the pacing, just right and succeeds in making the game interesting – an aspect that was more often than not absent in the previous two games.

Dizzy, my head is spinning

One aspect that has sadly been retained from the previous games is the 360-degree panoramic viewing interface. Some people don't mind it, but I have to say that it doesn't work for me and I'd rather it was left in the past. *Zork: The Grand Inquisitor* and *Riven* used a similar device – you can spin your head in any direction but only move from one pre-rendered

Oi knows moi place

But this is really the only area that I have a problem with. The only other strike against the game is that the sense of apathy directed towards the previous titles in the series means it's going to have to work that bit harder if it's to engage an audience. Everything else works well though, and the overall product is definitely a solid step forward for the *Journeyman Project* series. There's still room for improvement, but even if it doesn't manage to reach the levels of enjoyment achieved by *Zork: The Grand Inquisitor*, at least it's better than the pretentiousness of *Myst* and *Riven*. **Z**

JACK BALDWIN TSA Chief

Baldwin is the gruff, stern, hard-but-unfair, stern and gruff head of the Temporal Security Agency and as such treats his staff with a stern, gruff and stern rod of iron (which he keeps hidden behind his collection of 18th century pornography in his office). The part is played by TV favourite Ron Clarke. Clarke first worked on the black budget western in the popular 'One Sinner' miniseries. Mr. Baldwin is by Gary



WILLIAM DAUGHTON TSA Engineer

Electronics whizz-kid and inventor of the TSA Jump Suit, Daughton is secretly in love with Gage and takes every opportunity to conduct repairs on Gage's suit so he can bathe in the sweaty aroma left behind. Unknown drag queen Wayne Richie plays the young Daughton and claims it was a role he had been preparing his whole life for, even to the extent of wearing a time-based suit at home. (There's a prediction for you.)



DR ELLIOT SINCLAIR Time Travel Inventor

When he invented the Pegasus time-travelling device in 2315, everyone dismissed it because he was a distant relation of Sir Clive Sinclair and people hadn't forgotten the Sinclair C5. Luckily he used the machine to alter history so that the electric car became really popular and everyone took him seriously (this was the plot of the first game). Dr Sinclair is in fact portrayed by an old-school science-fiction author.



In Perspective

It has to be said that *Legacy Of Time* is a big improvement over its two *Journeyman* predecessors, thanks in the main to a better storyline and some pretty decent FMV. However, as far as the slow-moving, pre-rendered landscape adventure wars are concerned, they're still being won by the latest *Zork* title, no doubt due in no small part to the presence of TV's Dirk Benedict.

Journeyman Project 3

Journeyman Project 2

Riven

Zork: The Grand Inquisitor

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P90

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse



Score

A much-needed kick in the arse for the *Journeyman* series.



Price: £34.99

Release date: February

Publisher: Bröderbund Software

Telephone: 01784 431000

Website: www.journeyman3.com

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

Civil War Generals II

Andrew Wright still has nightmares about those silly Impressions games we sent him years ago. As soon as we saw they'd helped develop Sierra's latest wargame, we just couldn't resist giving it to him. Well, you would, wouldn't you?

7

IN THE FACE OF IT, *CIVIL WAR GENERALS II* has everything going for it. Somebody somewhere has had a year to iron out the creases and version two now sports a good multimedia guide to the American Civil War, a complete scenario editor that allows you to create battles from the ground up, and plenty of extra units and terrain features.

Instead of playing that boring old rebel Robert E Lee, you can play either side and any general you like from the North or South. There are more than 40 different battles to play and 17 campaigns, covering both eastern and western theatres. For the solo player, there are around 200 different scenarios to get your teeth into.

You get Mississippi gunboats, engineers, mortars and horse artillery to play with and extra terrain types such as forts, swamps and coastlines. And there's head-to-head play over the Internet, modem-to-modem, network or e-mail.

At first glance, *CWGII* looks a bit like other pseudo-miniature wargames with realistic 3D terrain, colourful unit graphics and a neat player interface. But that's at first glance. You soon realise that a unit composed of three soldiers can represent anywhere between 500 and 1000 men – and that the only way they can shoot



Gentlemen, choose your weapons – and your campaign, battles, generals, terrain types and political allegiance.

each other is to move adjacent to the target unit. Each unit represents a brigade or regiment, which is fine if you want to recreate complete battles such as Gettysburg, but as far as realism goes it's a no-no.

The closest game to *CWGII* is probably good old *Fantasy General*. You move a unit up, attack, move up another, attack again and so on. Yes, you've got long-range artillery bombardments and specialist sharpshooters, but the overall appearance is wickedly unrealistic when compared to the definitive ACW games of Talonsoft's *Battleground* series.

This is a real crying shame, because most of the game mechanics are superb. Leaders and other units have several factors such as morale, health, experience, that affect both combat results and behaviour under fire. You can rally units, rest them, swap leaders and generally take a lot of time getting the command and control right. But why bother when the battlefield is such a comic-book affair?

The point of victory

The most innovative feature is the 'dynamic' victory point allocation. Fight over a hex and it becomes even more valuable to each side, so the battle really hots up where the fighting takes place rather than on obscure victory point locations that nobody cares about. The more you fight over an insignificant hillock, the more victory points you get for holding it. The campaign is superbly thought out too – you need to conserve troops and yet win your battles, so there are endless decisions and strategies to try.

But even when you chuck in some spectacularly clear videos, good sound effects, atmospheric music and really detailed weapons data, the end result is a giant waste of time because the corny graphics spoil everything. The units don't even face the right way; more often than not, the units on opposing sides will have their backs to each other as they fight, thanks to the limited number of bitmaps representing each one.

In short, *CWGII* is a huge disappointment. There's a hell of a good game engine in there somewhere, but overall the game is full of holes, not to mention countless bugs. To put it more succinctly, it's just not very good. **Z**



(Above) The battle of Antietam is underway. The screen's inset overview map and graphic interface show the state of each unit. (Above right) The victory points change to reflect the severity of the fighting.

In Perspective

CWGII is likeSSI's *Fantasy General* with knobs and muskets. Despite its wealth of technical data and hundred-odd scenarios though, it can't compare with the likes of Talonsoft's *Battleground*.

Civil War Generals II

Civil War Generals

Fantasy General

Talonsoft's *Battleground* series

I-Magic's ACW: *Sumpter To Appomattox*

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: 486/66 or above

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All Windows compatible sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Note: 50Mb hard disk space required. No multi-player option under Win 3.1



Score

For ACW nuts only.

63

Price: £39.95

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Sierra

Telephone: 0118 920 9100

Website: www.sierra.com

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WarBreeds



Such is the volume of real-time strategy games currently swamping the *PC Zone* office, we finally relented and let **Steve Hill** review one. At least it got him out of the house for once.



R

UN 'EM UP THE PATH, KICK 'EM UP THE arse, throw bleach in their eyes... all in a lurid science-fiction stylee. It's war, but not as we know it. Eschewing the blood-splattered trenches of conventional warfare in favour of more clinical alien affray, *WarBreeds* is a chilling warning of the dangers of genetic engineering in a world gone mad. Well no, of course it isn't; it's another real-time strategy game. And it goes a little bit like this...

Players command one of four different alien clans vying for supremacy on an alien planet. For those with time on their hands, the manual contains an elaborate story that explains how these clans came about, and it makes for a thoroughly boring read, not to mention being largely unintelligible and wholly unnecessary. Whoever wrote it clearly fancies himself as a budding sci-fi writer, wittering on about Imperial Orders, Ancient Prophecies and Magha Dhuerenya (wasn't he a Hungarian 1500m runner?).

Whatever, it doesn't matter. All that matters here is looking after number one. No tangible reason is given for the conflict, it simply boils down to a sinister subtext of racial hatred and an innate desire to be cock of the roost. The various clans could choose to live in harmony, but obviously a peace 'em up wouldn't make for particularly enthralling gameplay. Incidentally, the action is set on the planet Aeolia, which is surely far too similar to Areola to be accidental.

Gene genie

Having assumed the colours of a particular clan, before you can get started, special plant-like pods have to be harvested. These pods collect solar energy which is then used to power refineries, which in turn power magic machines that create various bio-mechanical devices and creatures who are good at fighting. Essentially then, it's the same old balance between resource management and bloody conflict, albeit with a unique Darwinian twist in that the player can customise the creatures in his army through genetic research. When enemy creatures are defeated, genetic material can be scraped from

"In the heat of battle, it's usually a case of getting tooled up with whatever is available and steaming in en masse."

their fetid remains before they decompose and used to magic up some more weaponry. In total, 32,000 slightly different creatures can be created. Which is a lot.

The various weapons are useful in different situations: for instance, a heat gun can take out air targets, while a quill gun is effective for destroying enemy pods. In the heat of battle though, assigning specific tasks can be a little tricky and it's usually a case of getting tooled up with whatever is available and steaming in en masse, along with the usual shouting.

(Right) Weird alien thingies re-enact a famous battle from *Red Alert*. (Below) "I can't believe those bastards left without telling me which pub they were going to."



This planet ain't big enough for the four of us

There are four clans in *WarBreeds* that you should acquaint yourself with...

TANU

Generally reptilian in form, they are intelligent, aggressive, expansionist and fierce. They are excellent scouts and consider exploration to be essential, their swiftness allowing them to begin and end battles without fear of pursuit.



SEN-SOTH

Regarded as both bizarre and unintelligible by the other races (a bit like the Welsh). Although small and physically weak, the Sen-Soth mature quickly, and the sensory organs developed over millennia of subterranean life endow them with excellent perception.



MAGHA

Although the Magha appear physically lean and weak, it's deceptive because they are among the cleverest and most deadly of foes. Masters of spying, stealth, sabotage and terrorism, several of their combat creatures are naturally invisible. They seldom fight directly, preferring deadly suicide attacks instead.



KELIKA

Slow and cumbersome beasts, when their anger is aroused, their sheer size and strength makes them one of the most fearsome of enemies. They can absorb massive amounts of damage before they fall, and generally assume a siege mentality.



The selfish gene

Although it's hard to feel any empathy for genetically manufactured units that resemble something from a Roger Dean nightmare, one side effect is that there are few qualms in using them as cannon fodder. Whereas in more orthodox war scenarios you might feel a slight flinch of humanity in sending a lone soldier to meet an inevitable early death, sending some ridiculous bio-mechanical oddity on a perilous solo scouting mission doesn't seem quite so harsh. Having said that, those with a firmer grip on reality will be aware that they are nothing more than coloured pixels on a monitor, whereas those able to suspend their disbelief and enter into a fully immersive environment have clearly heard too much marketing jargon. Besides, the units are fairly expendable, as due to power limitations only a certain number can be created at once. This eventually forces the player to come out and attack, rather than sit back and stockpile units indefinitely.

In common with much of the genre, in terms of route-finding at least, the artificial intelligence occasionally borders on the moronic, and squads often have to be led by the claw if they're to reach their intended destination. They're actually fairly sharp when it comes to scuffling though and can generally handle themselves pretty well when it comes to a fight, although each unit can be programmed with specific modes of aggression or tact.



Sound and vision

The graphics in *WarBreeds* are solid if unspectacular, and the various clans are clearly colour-coded. The sound effects are of a futuristic bent and one of the weapons emits a 'doo-doo' disco noise that's eerily reminiscent of Celtic songstress Kelly Marie's '80s chart hit *It Feels Like I'm In Love* ("My head is in a spin/My feet don't touch the ground: doo-doo"). Add to this a detached robotic female voice and some unpleasant squelching, and it's more than a little annoying to anyone unfortunate enough to be within earshot.

Ultimately, aficionados of the genre will doubtless have seen it all before: same meat, different gravy, if you will. But this doesn't by any means make *WarBreeds* a bad game, as considered on its own merits, it's an extremely absorbing affair. Just because it's derivative doesn't necessarily mean it should be ignored – indeed, were that the case, Oasis would still be allegedly robbing car stereos. Unbelievers who may have been puzzled by all the fuss over real-time strategy games will soon realise the appeal when they find themselves still sitting there, unblinking, in front of their monitor four hours later, rebuffing all attempts at conversation, offers of soft drugs, and invitations to the pub. Don't scoff – it could easily happen to you. **Z**



(Above) New units, same intent: blast the shit out of everything in sight in a C&C stylee. (Above right) You may find it hard to identify with your units on a personal level, unless of course you're a complete weirdo.

In Perspective

You couldn't describe *WarBreeds* as the best of its genre, but it's still some distance from the worst. It makes a reasonable starting point for the newcomer, but even if you've played all the others to death, it should still hold your interest. And at 20 quid, it's well worth a look.

WarBreeds

Total Annihilation

C&C: Red Alert

WarCraft 2

Warwind 2

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P90

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: DirectX 5 compatible sound card

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Note: Requires approximately 30Mb hard disk space, 4-speed CD-ROM or faster, DirectX 5 compatible PCI video card with 2Mb video RAM



Score

Curiously addictive.



Price: £19.99

Release date: February

Publisher: Red Orb Entertainment

Telephone: 01429 855000

Website: www.redorb.com

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

Actua Golf 2



Oh oh – it's the big tee-off for *Actua Golf 2* as it comes under the scrutiny of **Paul Presley**, the toughest critic in the land. Yikes.

P

OR LATECOMERS TO THE MAG, HERE'S the story so far. One of my favourite games is *David Leadbetter's Golf*, which came out a good four or five years ago.

I've yet to find a golf game to better it, and believe me, I've played them all. I've even tried my hand at real golf, so I've got a good vantage point from which to measure my opinions. Some have come pretty close (*PGA Tour Pro*), some have been seriously overrated (*Links*), and others have been just plain mediocre (*World Cup Golf* on the PlayStation). But none have been able to capture the true essence of the game like *DLG*. It had the lot, including working handicaps; career golfers; comprehensive records and replays; excellent graphics (for the time, obviously) that eschewed photo-realism for 3D panning and tracking; and fully adjustable shots with a dynamic swing bar that took into account foot stance, ball lie and other factors and adjusted itself accordingly.

Erm, so how about reviewing *Actua* then?

Anyway, I'm telling you all this because *Actua Golf 2* is perhaps the closest contender yet to make a grab for the *Leadbetter* crown. There are a lot of similarities between the two, the most notable being a similar approach to the graphics. Of course, the difference is that these are 3Dfx'd to the max and consequently look far, far better.

The control method is similar too, although it's not without its faults. For one, the 'Actua Swing' (using the mouse as a pseudo-club, with scrolling speed representing shot power) takes a lot of getting used to. It works to a certain extent, but I can see there being a lot of people who are just going to thoroughly hate it and refuse to use it. You can revert to a more familiar three- or two-click swing bar, but this has a slight problem in that it's too small for the more delicate shots (close



Although other members complained, the greenskeeper refused to budge from his defence of 'artistic flair'.

chipping or putting, for example). True, it is playable, for the most part, but just be prepared to swear a lot at bad shots that aren't really your fault.

Oooh – a bit picky, aren't you?

There are other problems with the game, but in its defence, these are mainly the kind of things that tend to be apparent in all *Actua* games – namely graphical glitches. There's a lot of walking around on the course, all of which is nice and all but often leads to events such as players taking shots while others are standing too near and consequently swinging their clubs straight through their head, players strolling about on the green while you're trying to concentrate on your shot – unforgivable manners in the real world – and players waving and celebrating to the (invisible) crowd after getting down in, say, 17.

If it sounds like I'm being negative, it's because I tend to be very harsh with golf games, mainly because I've already seen perfection, and if you want to win my approval you have to be bloody good indeed. *Actua Golf 2* is a very good golf game, one of the best of the genre currently available – only slightly bettered by *PGA Tour Pro* perhaps, but a darn sight more playable than *Links*. But I'm just being picky. I'll leave you with the words of my flatmate, who's probably far more in tune with your standards than I: "It's one of the best golf games I've ever played." And who can possibly argue with that? ☺



(Above left) It'd be a hell of a tricky lie, but the visual effect would be worth it. (Right) It was unnerving on the course certainly, but the St Andrew's Formation Golf Dancers were quite the sight around the clubhouse.

In Perspective

Okay, here's the gig. It's much better than the seriously flawed *Links* series. *PGA* still has the edge (just) in total playability. Generally though, *Actua* is one of the better golf games out there. However, I still think *DLG* pips them all for overall... er, golfiness, despite its age.

Actua Golf 2

PGA Tour Pro

Links LS 98

David Leadbetter's Golf

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

(32Mb recommended)

Processor: P133 recommended

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard



Score

Bags of fun and very, very playable... but I know which game I still prefer.

87

Price: £34.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Gremlin Interactive

Telephone: 01142 753423

Website: www.gremlin.co.uk

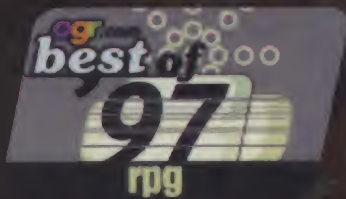
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CART Precision Racing

Steve Hill tries on a pair of stringback gloves for extra purchase. Some people are meant to drive, others are meant to be driven.



MICROSOFT'S WORLD DOMINATION campaign continues, with a further inroad into the wonderful world of games, the one area where they've as yet had mixed success. First though, there's a dirty trick to negotiate. During the installation procedure, the set-up attempts to lure you into installing Microsoft Internet Explorer on the vague promise of providing access to an on-line racing school, or some such nonsense. Readers of our *Man Who Knows* column will be aware that Microsoft are currently embroiled in an extremely expensive court case, accused of monopolisation of the browser market. Yet here you are, an inadvertent mouse-click away from having their software forced upon you. Which is a bit naughty, wouldn't you agree?

Just say no

After refusing their offer on general principle, the game kicks in and reveals itself to be an in-depth simulation of *IndyCar Racing*, a sport familiar only to Americans and seasoned observers of the late-night ITV schedule. Based on the 1997 season, the official CART tracks have apparently been modelled from source data and are accurate to within 10cm. Furthermore, they include visual landmarks such as trees, billboards and buildings that are true to the real-life tracks, although it has to be said that one interminable oval looks much the same as any other.

After just a couple of laps though, it soon becomes apparent that this is no laugh-a-minute buggy race, and anyone with a penchant for power-ups and novelty weapons would be advised to seek their driving thrills elsewhere. *CART Precision Racing* is a no-holds



While the graphics are best described as sparse, it's a pretty clean and speedy affair, although the cars do tend to look as though they sit slightly above the track.

barred simulation with little concession given to the fact that sitting in front of a monitor is an entirely different experience to grappling with the wheel of a high-speed vehicle. Designed and tested by real drivers and race engineers, the vehicle models are so realistic that it's not long before you're bored. The controls may feel extremely rigid, but the slightest oversteer causes the car to career off the track or embark on an infuriating spin, followed by the traditional outburst of foul and abusive language.

No fun

In the days before technology went mad, games used to be fun. With a simulation of this ilk, the best you can probably hope for is to achieve a vague sense of satisfaction at getting to grips with it. But when it comes to analysing your performance using Pi Research telemetry software, you have to question whether this is actually a game or some kind of interactive multimedia hybrid.

For those with the time and patience to master it, *CART Precision Racing* offers pretty much everything. Entire seasons can be raced, including the Friday and Saturday qualifying sessions, although anyone who perseveres with 300 practice laps can only be one step away from needing psychiatric help.

Despite the anal attention to detail, in common with many racing games, the other drivers show a distinct lack of intelligence, rarely deviating from the racing line and taking little or no evasive action, even when sharing the track with someone who's clearly drunk. And that's something that can't be simulated. **Z**



The tracks have been modelled from original source data and feature actual landmarks, trees and billboards and so on. However, one oval looks much like another.



In Perspective

There are just so many excellent racing games for the PC now, it's getting increasingly hard for any game to stand out from the crowd. Going for the full-on sim experience, Microsoft are up against the now-dated *IndyCar 2* and *F1GP2* and the awesome *F1 Simulation*. It's okay, but it doesn't really compare.

CART Precision Racing

F1 Simulation

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

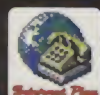
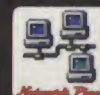
Processor: P100

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All Windows 95 compatible sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joystick

Note: Supports force-feedback peripherals. Free Internet matchmaking at the Internet Gaming Zone (www.zone.com)



Score

More physics than fun.

72

Price: £39.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Microsoft

Telephone: 0345 002000

Website: www.microsoft.com

dan
Personal Computers

The People's
Choice

Plane Crazy is simple to pick up, but really hard to master - PC Zone

You would be Plane Crazy to buy another game - PC Format

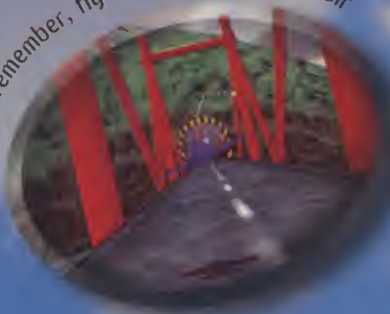


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Lords Of Magic

Resident anorak **Daniel Emery** checks out Sierra's new strategy game.



SIERRA'S LATEST STRATEGY GAME IS basically the third in the *Lords* series, and in common with its companions it takes turn-based strategy and mixes it with real-time combat.

You start the game with one of eight different races (life, death, order, chaos etc), and then choose your class (warrior, thief or mage). In this respect, it's not unlike *Dungeons And Dragons*.

Once you've liberated your hometown and built a multitude of structures, be it a thief's guild or a military barracks, it's time to muster up an army. But there's a lot more for the player to do than just produce several units as you would in say, *WarCraft*. You have to research spells, explore the lands and build up allegiances with other players and so forth. All this takes place in a turn-based environment and although it's quite enjoyable, the delay



Resource management, real-time combat, and men in girly dresses. What more could you want?

while you hang around waiting for the computer to take its turn can prove somewhat frustrating.

The combat, however, is in real time, and I found myself fighting for my life on the first turn. Unlike C&C though, you can't just select everyone and charge. This game is more strategic and I constantly took advantage of the pause button to see what was going on.

The presentation could be better; the characters would benefit from a graphical facelift and the battle sounds soon become repetitive. The enemy AI's a bit shoddy too. Apart from that though, it's still a decent strategy game. If you have any doubts, check out the demo we ran last issue. **Z**

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb
Processor: P90
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard
Note: There's a patch on Sierra's website that fixes turn delays



Score

Addictive strategy game let down by poor enemy AI.

78

Price: £34.99
Release date: Out now
Publisher: Sierra
Telephone: 0118 920 9100
Website: www.sierra.com

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Personal Computers

The People's Choice

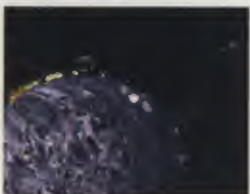
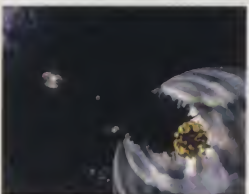
Warheads

Richie Shoemaker knows all about planetary struggles. He has one every day when he decides what to wear.



HIS TURN-BASED AFFAIR REMINDED ME straightaway of the annelid slaughterfest *Worms*. The idea is for each computer- or human-controlled player (you can have up to ten) to keep their single spaceship out of harm's way while at the same time trying to destroy their opponent. Each play area is randomly generated and contains a number of planets which, depending on their size, may affect the trajectory of each of the 50 weapons that can be used. The difference between this and *Worms* is that you have to worry about gravity wells rather than the effects of wind (parp).

Unfortunately, while the variety of weaponry and the fact you can edit them adds a certain amount of depth to the



Your enemies may not be far away, but gravity has this awful effect of bringing you down.

proceedings, *Warheads* lacks any real longevity, especially for the single player. Both graphics and sound are pallid and basic and it's not long before you realise that *Warheads* is a sound idea but badly implemented (or perhaps a bad idea but well implemented, depending on how you look at it). The fiddly controls aren't as intuitive as in *Worms* and humour is certainly absent – there's no speech for one thing: all your taunts are preset and consist of boring VGA text messages that are hard to read. Suffice to say, once you've spent a couple of hours gouging chunks from planetary bodies, you'll have found a winning strategy against the computer (or indeed your more 'unpredictable' human opponents) and you'll have lost interest completely. Unless you have an Internet connection or a whole bunch of mates to play against, I'd suggest you stick to something a little more polished. *Worms 2* perhaps. **Z**

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: P75
Graphics: PCI VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard
Note: 8Mb hard drive space required



Score

Worms in space – but without the humour.

52

Price: £19.99
Release date: Out now
Publisher: Instant Access
Telephone: 0181 205 2596
Website: www.ionos.com

dan
Personal Computers

The People's Choice

World League Basketball

Steve Hill casts a suspicious eye over the latest pretender to *NBA 98*'s recently acquired throne.

U

NUSUALLY FOR AMERICANS, IN THIS case 'World League' actually means World League, rather than North America and a token bit of Canada. A total of 36 teams are available, from as far afield as Croatia and New Zealand, and they can indeed compete in an international league competition, as well as play exhibition matches. Arcade and simulator modes are available, team line-ups can be altered and so forth, all in a fairly easy to use front-end with a satisfying thud between menus.

Perhaps incongruously for a sports game, *World League Basketball* can be played quite adequately with the mouse, passing and switching between players with one button, and shooting with the other. Within minutes, some fairly intricate passing moves can be put together, followed by some



So then, is basketball really just an excuse for grown men to play with their balls in public? Discuss.

reasonably spectacular baskets, although the actual player involvement required to score seems negligible. The players slam or dunk (or whatever it is they do), depending largely on where you shoot from. Defensive duties prove a little more tricky, as the player under control has a tendency to face the wrong way with his arse sticking out; however, preset defensive formations can be brought into play on the fly.

Essentially, this is a 'No Frills' representation of basketball. It's by no means unplayable, but it smacks of functionality in virtually every department. Make of this what you will, but I found that I could play *World League Basketball* quite comfortably while on the phone. **Z**



AHX-1

It's that **Richie Shoemaker** in another not-so magnificent flying machine.

G

IT'S A RARE THING THESE DAYS TO SEE a flight sim that doesn't take advantage of 3D hardware acceleration. Lens flare and translucent smoke effects seem to be everywhere (unless you discount NovaLogic's recent *F-22 Raptor*), and after playing the rather handsome-looking *Longbow 2*, I was all ready to ladle out words like 'hideous' and 'jerky' upon *AHX-1* in large amounts. I soon realised however that some people still play games in blocky old pixelvision, and that they just might be interested in a game that looks good without one of those 3D cards that we here at *Zone* seem to have taken to our hearts (and indeed our loins).

The trouble is, *AHX-1* is hideous and jerky unless you have at least a P200, in which case you should (by law) already have a 3D card and maybe even a shiny new copy of



A rather nice but deceptive in-game shot. Watching the scenery roll beneath you isn't as pleasant.

Longbow 2 to play on it. If you have the minimum spec P166 with 16Mb RAM, I suggest you take a look at something like *Comanche 3* first. Apart from jerkvision, almost everything about *AHX-1* is below standard, and if it wasn't for the variety of the missions I'd have no choice but to suggest fines be levied at those responsible for this game. The simulation mode isn't particularly exciting and the arcade mode is devoid of any immediacy. As an addition to the genre, *AHX-1* stands out as a shining example of mediocrity. The explosions are awful, and with the obligatory 40-odd missions, based over three world theatres, it's obvious that the developers decided to adhere to a rigid and boring script. If Israeli pilots really did have a hand in developing this, as it proudly proclaims on the box, then we'd best not let Saddam Hussein hear about it, or his heavily moustached army could soon be marching their way across the desert. **Z**



Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: P75
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse, joystick, keyboard
Note: Double-speed CD drive required (quad recommended)



Score

A mild diversion. Nothing more, nothing less.

50

Price: £39.99
Release date: March
Publisher: Mindscape
Telephone: 01444 246333
Website: <http://mindscapeuk.com>

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb
Processor: P166
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick
Note: P200 MMX recommended



Score

There are plenty of better helicopter sims available.

40

Price: £39.99
Release date: Out now
Publisher: GT Interactive
Telephone: 0171 258 3791
Website: www.gtinteractive.com

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

Budget ZONE

If your wallet's still recovering from the Christmas spend-fest, take a look at the £24.99 compilations here from Europress, or *Front Line Fighters* from Digital Integration. **Richie Shoemaker** jingles the change in his trousers.



TOTAL ANIMALS

Not so much disappointing as a bad idea. The marketing bods at Europress must have thought long and hard when searching their collective brains for titles to put in this compendium; it's a shame they couldn't have stretched their brains a bit further, because the games they finally came up with don't make for a very varied package.

Catz and *Dogz* are basically the same thing, and they aren't so much games as 'desktop toys': choose a pet to adopt and use your mouse to pick it up, play with it and put it away when you've had enough. The little critters are fun for a while, but after stroking them and spraying them with paint you'll soon be wanting to substitute the squeaky mouse for a brick. There isn't really any middle ground – you'll either love *Catz* and *Dogz* or absolutely loathe them with a vengeance.

The best title in this compilation has to be *Worms*, a 2D turn-based strategy game where each player controls a team of tool-up grubs and tries to blast his opponent's little army into oblivion. The variety of weapons on offer ensures strategic depth and the laughometer is always brimming.



TOTAL INSANITY

By virtue of being the first and oldest compilation in this round-up, *Total Insanity* deserves a place if only for having the word 'total' in it – though quite what it has to do with mental disorder is anyone's guess.

First off is *Star Trek TNG: A Final Unity*, a point-and-click affair featuring voices from the *Next Gen* crew. Headed by baldy Captain Jean Luc Picard, you must guide your crew through five adventures featuring bizarre aliens, impossible equipment and predictable storylines. It's nothing particularly taxing, but it's the closest you'll ever get to appearing in an episode of the show – thankfully.

The token sports offering, *PGA European Tour*, is a damn fine one and probably the least dated too; it also has a more 'arcadey' feel than the *Links* series. There are three courses to choose from, all with glowing commentary from Peter Allis, and peppered with the usual FMV, fly-bys and brain-numbing music you'd normally associate with EA Sports.

Finally there's *Network Q RAC Rally*,

which now seems a little dated when compared to its sequel *International Rally Championship*. However, if you take away the younger brother's 3D accelerated graphics, there's probably little between them.

If you find this package for 20 quid then it's worth buying; failing that, you may as well select the titles you want from the budget shelf separately.

Star Trek TNG: A Final Unity
Reviewed: 27 **94**

PGA European Tour
Reviewed: 38 **94**

Network Q RAC Rally
Reviewed: 44 **94**

TOTAL SPORTS

Total Sports is an ideal way to gear yourself up for a summer of sport and the bevy of new games that will no doubt precede it.

It may have been flawed, but *FIFA 97* was actually a pretty good football sim when it was released a year ago,

and it still remains quite playable today, although anyone who's got *FIFA 98* or *Actua Soccer 2* probably wouldn't spend much time with it. The controls take some getting used to and the intelligence factor probably takes things a bit too far, but then a little perseverance goes a long way – as any *FIFA* fan will tell you.

When it comes to golf, *Links LS* has to be the only choice for the serious simulation fan. It may prove a bit too fiddly for anyone used to the *PGA Tour* series, but if you like 'em tough or want to go up another level, you'll find nowt better.

Codemasters' *Pete Sampras Tennis 97* rounds off this sporting trio nicely. It's simple to play but suitably hard to master. However, the motion-captured players are beginning to look a little plain, even though it hasn't been that long since the game was released. That said though, thanks to all the different camera angles, it does ooze atmosphere. There may be a couple of new tennis titles on the horizon, but this is the best you'll find right now.

For an introduction to sports games, you would be hard-pushed indeed to find a compilation better than this.

FIFA 97
Reviewed: 46 **86**

Links LS
Reviewed: 43 **94**

Pete Sampras Tennis 97
Reviewed: 53 **92**



It gets a bit dull in single-player mode, but the multi-player games are great fun, especially after a few beers.

Catz and Dogz let this collection down – the inclusion of something like *Creatures* would have made it a highly recommended purchase. However, seeing as you can buy *Worms United* on budget and the other two are about to be released for a tenner each, you'd have to have an unhealthy obsession with animals to buy this motley crew.

Catz
Reviewed: 42 **80**

Dogz
Reviewed: 42 **80**

Worms
Reviewed: 33 **84**

TOTAL RACING

It's quite a surprise to see *International Rally Championship* available as part of a compilation just a couple of months after its full-priced release – but a pleasant one, especially if you're the proud owner of a 3D graphics card. Disappointing as a sequel, it shines as a game in its own right. If you can forgive the apparent oversight of any deep simulation facets, you'll love it.

Screamer 2 is the second-best game here, and although its graphics seem a little muddy after *IRC*, it's a great arcade challenge. The five cars swerve all over the place, and it's bloody fast.

The final game, *Need For Speed 2*, is another disappointing sequel: it lacks depth where it's needed and attention

to detail where it doesn't. Landing on our desks in the same month as *Carmageddon* didn't help much either. Still, loads of cars and options means it's very playable, although you probably won't find yourself stuck for hours on end behind the wheel as you would with *IRC* and *Screamer 2*.

As a collection, *Total Racing* lacks contrast, but it's worthwhile just for the excellent *International Rally Championship* alone. If you're one of those people who can bore an entire pub with stories of car tomfoolery, you'll no doubt relish it. Unless you already have a copy of *IRC*, get out there and snap it up.

Need For Speed 2
Reviewed: 50 **78**

Intl Rally Championship
Reviewed: 56 **84**

Screamer 2
Reviewed: 45 **93**

FOOTBALL FEVER

Well that's torn the tenuous link running through this month's *Budget Zone*. Why they couldn't have called this collection 'Total Football' is something social commentators will no doubt be pondering for a very long time, or at least until they get home from the pub. No matter, at least they've included *Total Football Management*, a game that by its title alone lends a smidgen of credibility to my gauche commentary.



For fans of the beautiful game, this compilation does at least succeed in giving the player some variety. The two footy sims, *FIFA 97* and *Actua Soccer: Club Edition*, are subtly different from one another. The latter is the more playable, although it is afflicted by a couple of annoying bugs.

The strategy offering, *Total Football Management*, is more like the *Premier Manager* games than *Championship Manager*, and has loads more graphical icons and even dodgy 3D highlights thrown in for good measure. What it lacks in realism it makes up for in the scale of its customisable features. However, it's very tempting to make things too easy for yourself, so longevity could be a problem. Rest assured, CM2 fans will hate it.

The final disc in the package, *The Ultimate Encyclopaedia Of Soccer*, is a multimedia offering that was out of date the moment it was released. If you ever take it out of the box more than once, I'll be very surprised indeed. Having said that though, *Football Fever* is pretty much OK – it's nothing special you understand, but it's still far better than any cricket compilation could ever hope to be.



FIFA 97
Reviewed: 46 **86**

Actua Soccer: Club Edition
Reviewed: 52 **80**

Total Football Management
Reviewed: 61 **50**

Ultimate Encyclopaedia
Not reviewed



PC Zone Recommends

FRONT LINE FIGHTERS

(Digital Integration)

Ever since the heady days of *Fighter Pilot* on the humble Spectrum, Digital Integration have been cranking out excellent flight sims at a steady rate. And here we have three of their old titles upgraded to take advantage of 3Dfx cards.

Apache Longbow, the oldest of the three, does benefit, although it still looks a little basic. *Hind* looks gorgeous and *F-16* even better. All three games are classics and deserve to remain so for a long time. The two helicopter sims can now be linked to run over DI's virtual battlefield system, allowing Yank-flavoured prop-heads to take on human-controlled Reds.

With a brand spanking new Afghanistan Campaign

for *F-16* thrown in, at £34.99 this whole bundle is exceptional value for money, especially for owners of 3Dfx cards. You even get all the manuals too, which is more than you can say for some compilations. Even if you suffer from flightsimophobia, there's simply no excuse for not having this in your collection.

Apache Longbow
Reviewed: 31 **96**

Hind
Reviewed: 40 **90**

F-16 Fighting Falcon
Reviewed: 52 **91**



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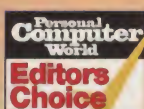
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Our gaming heritage

We've now got the perfect emulator, but we ain't got the games...

WHETHER OR NOT YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THE games mentioned in Charlie Brooker's retro games resource feature (see right), it's worth taking the time to investigate the subject further. It's an interesting history lesson that, for me, spans more than 20 years of computer gaming. Personally, if I had my way 'the history of computer gaming' would be a compulsory subject on the national curriculum (you can imagine the schoolyard banter: "What's your next class, Barry?"

"Double Games History..." but I won't get my way, so it never will be. I'm still very much into the retro thing however, and take great solace from the fact that a vast number of talented individuals are keeping old games alive by way of the World Wide Web – constructing often

elaborate and expansive 'virtual (ugh) museums' full of historical information, opinions and downloads. But why devote time to old, outdated computer games? For one thing, many of these games were highly imaginative and managed to make the most of what they ran on. No doubt they will have been a big influence on a lot of today's games, so sometimes it's worth reminding ourselves just how good they really were. Second, as older machines die off, only to be recycled and made into cookers for posh people, the games programmed for them die too. In my opinion, old games are like old books – the good ones retain their power over me, even as the years progress. *Hypersports* on the Sinclair ZX Spectrum is still great to play, even in 1998 (I even played it last night), but should we really allow it to disappear forever, simply because it lacks a 'Pentium Only' sticker on the box? The Internet at least gives us the opportunity to see – sometimes even play – these forgotten treasures, even though the scrappy and vague laws surrounding the availability of old game code holds enthusiasts back. What I say is: old coders – open your long-lost classics to the public domain. Start a virtual (ugh) museum and let us have access to these games. Let us put some on our coverdiscs... People want to play them – and they're part of our past.

Paul Mallinson

Wave of emulation Part One: home computers

A touchy subject this month. Emulation, or those little programs that run games from other systems on your PC. Charlie Brooker blows the whole thing open.



Time waits for no man, and it pisses in the face of old computer systems. The continual evolution of the microprocessor means that today's systems are almost

immeasurably powerful compared to the hop-a-long clunk-boxes of yesteryear, and as such it's a piece of piss for your Pentium to effectively emulate, say, a Sinclair Spectrum – and to do it in a resizable window at that.

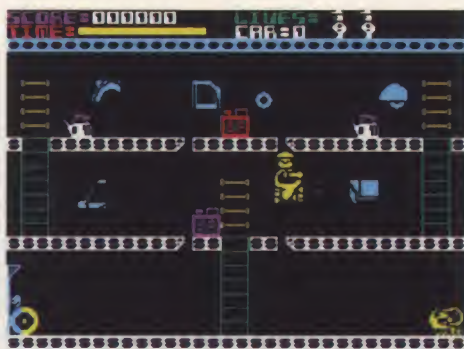
The renewed interest in 'retro-gaming' has created a small but dedicated band of enthusiasts swapping emulators and olde worlde games across the Internet, and here at *PC Zone* we've decided it's high time we paid some attention to the issue. We've split our report into two parts and are kicking off proceedings here with

home computer emulation; consoles and arcade games will have their turn next month.

Like any on-line 'scene', the world of emulation has developed its own convoluted lingo that can seem utterly bewildering to the newbie. On visiting a site, your first port of call should be the FAQ which will usually define terms and clear up a few of the more baffling references. Do bear in mind that emulation is very much a 'geek' hobby – much of the software you'll find is defiantly user-unfriendly and requires a brief investment of knowledge and patience to get it working. In other words, if you're so pampered by Windows 95 that you don't know what a DOS command line is, you're going to have to learn. And if you download anything that makes your PC explode in a shower of sparks, tough. It's your fault, not ours.



One of the best games ever? Steve Crow's classic *Starquake* brought back to life by emulation.



Want to find out more about the legendary Wally Week? Why not play *Automania* (left) on an emulator? Elite's classic *Rollercoaster* (right) makes a triumphant return after almost ten years in suspended animation.

SINCLAIR RESEARCH



ZX81

It was a mere 17 years ago, but it seems more like 200. The Sinclair ZX81 gave many people their first taste of the limitless frustration and infinite time-wasting afforded

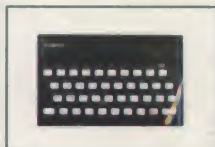
by a home computing hobby. Supplied as either a DIY 'kit' form or a pre-assembled doorstopper, the ZX81 had a meagre 1K of RAM (although a whopping 16K became available later), monochrome output and no sound chip whatsoever, but to pioneering spods it was as bracingly exciting as a hardcore pornographic film. And it also had *3D Monster Maze* – an extremely primitive forerunner to the likes of *Quake*.

ZX81 emulator

• <http://ftp.nvg.unit.no/pub/sinclair/>

ZX81 games

• <http://ftp.nvg.unit.no/pub/sinclair/snaps/zx81/>



ZX Spectrum

Ahh, the memories.

Loading games from a cheap tape recorder.

Watching the intro screen being drawn in, line by

line. Colour clash. *Chuckie Egg*. The faintly unsettling keyboard texture. *Jet Set Willy*. "Hilarious" in-jokes about Sir Clive Sinclair. *Lenslocks*. *Ultimate Play The Game*. *3D Ant Attack*. *Horace Goes Skiing*. POKE numbers. Masturbating furiously to *Sam Fox Strip Poker* (That's enough memories – Ed).

Many of today's best PC games programmers cut their teeth on the Spectrum, as did an entire generation of gamers. Considering that each game had to be squeezed inside the system's humble 48K memory, the

diversity it offered was actually quite remarkable, with game concepts encompassing everything from surreal allegorical storytelling (*Deus Ex Machina*) to cartoon dental hygiene (*Molar Maul*).

The machine still evokes fond memories today, although if you download some of these emulators and take a trip back in time, you'll doubtless feel a little let down – after all, let's face it: they were pretty shit. At the time, however, they were utterly enchanting – do try to bear that in mind. Interesting fact: out of all the systems here, it's the ZX Spectrum that seems to attract the most gifted webmasters. Bizarre.

WSpecEm (Windows 95): Probably the finest Speccy emulator around. Shareware.

• www.idt.ipp.pt/~rff-ribe/w32sp131.zip

• <http://alpha.pulsar.net/~conjuror/emu/Spectrum/Emulators/w32sp131.zip>

Jasper: If you haven't seen this yet, you're in for a treat. Created by Adam Davidson and Andrew Pollard, Jasper is a Java Spectrum emulator. What that means, dum-dum, is that you can play it in Netscape. A range of games are provided – just point and click.

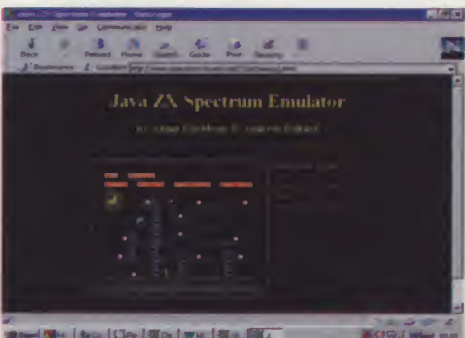
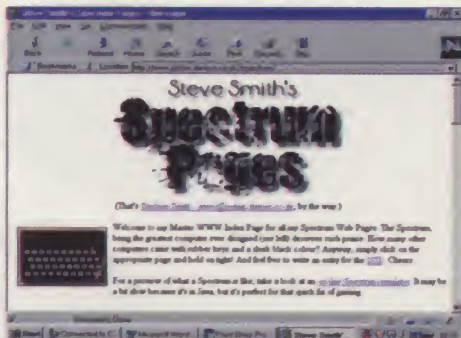
• www.spectrum.lovely.net/

Gremlin Interactive: A big thumbs up to Gremlin for making some of their old Spectrum games (namely *Bounder* and *Thing On A Spring*) available legally, for free, on their website. Incorporates Jasper for live play. Now, how about *Wanted: Monty Mole*?

• www.gremlin.co.uk/retroindex.html

Steve Smith's Spectrum Pages: Delightfully comprehensive site containing plenty of essential Spectrum info, games, emulators, links, downloads – and believe it or not, even jokes.

• www.jonlan.demon.co.uk/spectrum/

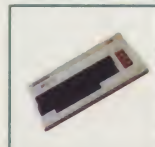


Look at the address above the screenshot on the right, and you'll find out where you can find Steve Smith's excellent website. Below that, you'll see that Charlie has three web browsers open, plus *Word* and *Outlook*.

Doug Ealey's Spectrum Games Archive: Superb, easy-to-navigate archive of Spectrum games, complete with mini reviews.

• www.soton.ac.uk/~doug1/Spectrum/

COMMODORE



Vic-20

Forerunner to the wildly popular Commodore 64, the Vic-20 didn't really have much to recommend it other than a decent platform game called *The Perils Of Willy* – and

even that was based on a classic Spectrum title (the legendary – and totally bugged – *Jet Set Willy*). Still, if you are determined to emulate the damn thing, here's where to aim...

Linus' Commodore Pages: Vic-20: One of the better Vic-20 fan sites around.

• <http://members.xoom.com/vic20/index.html>

Vic-20 PC VIC: An accurate DOS emulation of the 64's little brother.

• <http://hydra.cs.utwente.nl/~schooten/software/vic-20/pcvic.html>



Commodore 64

Cavaliers and Roundheads.

Mods and Rockers. Bob and

Paula. Commodore owners and

Spectrum enthusiasts. No early '80s schoolyard was complete without

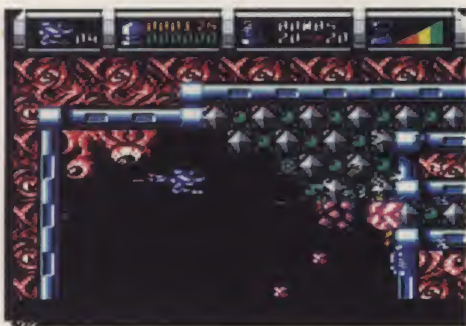
a gaggle of greasy-haired oiks jostling in the corner, prolonging the ongoing debate: which was the best?

In truth (and these are hard words for a long-time Sinclair devotee to write), the Commodore creamed it. At least technically; the crown for gaming variety might have gone to Sir Clive's plastic baby, but in the hardware stakes the Yankee pretender was the clear winner. Why? Three words: no colour clash. Three more words: SID sound chip. Two more words: proper keyboard. Need we go on?

Before rushing to your modem, bear in mind that a professional Commodore 64 retro package is already commercially available in the shape of Activision's

IT IS THE LAW

Here at *PC Zone* we stand firm in our view that software piracy is intrinsically wrong. There's little doubt that it has the potential to undermine sales and jeopardise future game production. But we nevertheless feel that there's a huge difference between the unauthorised manufacture and distribution of 10,000 copies of *Quake II*, and a 16K snapshot of *Horace Goes Skiing* e-mailed to a friend. Few companies seriously expect to still earn a penny flogging ancient Spectrum games, and many have turned a blind eye to the fast and furious exchange of such titles across the Internet. This doesn't mean it isn't illegal though. In the eyes of the law, the only viable excuse for downloading a piece of copyrighted software is if you already have your own original, paid-for copy of the game – download anything else (assuming it hasn't been placed in the public domain) and you're breaking the law, and *PC Zone* cannot and will not assume any responsibility for the consequences. If in doubt, don't download.



The *Cybernoid* series (*Cybernoid II*, left) was hugely popular during the mid to late '80s. Coal-digging *Monty Mole* (seen in *Monty On The Run*, right) elevated *Gremlin* to fame during the Miner's Strike.

◀ **Essential Collection** which contains 15 classic titles such as *Little Computer People* and *Decathlon*. Should you find any of these titles on-line, to download them is to commit a criminal offence.

Free64: Nice freeware emulator.

• <http://home.gvi.net/~martin/free6401.zip>

PC64: Another one, this time shareware.

• <ftp://ftp.funet.fi/pub/cbm/emulation/pc64>

Attack Of The Mutant Camels: Jeff Minter has stated on his web page(s) that he doesn't mind retro-heads downloading his legendary CBM 64 titles. Hurrah, say all of us. Here's one to get you started: *Attack Of The Mutant Camels*.

• www.geocities.com/SoHo/Gallery/5464/c64amc.zip

Bullwinkle's Arcade Classics: Very good site, especially when you consider it's maintained by a cartoon moose (yes, really).

• <http://home.ptd.net/~faethor/c64class/c64class.htm>

Linus' Commodore Pages: A decent C64-centric fansite that's worth a visit.

• <http://hem2.passagen.se/c64linus/>



Commodore Amiga

It's still early days for Amiga emulation: UAE isn't bad, but you'll need a beefy machine and a studious nature to get it going. The genuine article is still your best bet.

UAE – Universal Amiga Emulator

• www.uae.de/

ATARI



Atari 400/800 /XL

None of us here on the *Zone* team can personally attest to the 'joys' of the early Atari computer systems, but Bob Dudani, MD of the Computer Exchange round the corner, reckons the Atari 800 was, like, the best thing ever, and stoically maintains that *Star Raiders* has yet to be beaten. God knows what he's on about – it looks like rubbish to us.

Rainbow 95: Excellent shareware Atari emulator. Runs under Windows 95.

• www.davesclassics.com/Atari/8bit/Emulators/r95dm136.zip
• www.cityscape.co.uk/users/jx91/emulators.html

X-Lit: Another good Atari emu, this time for DOS.

• www.davesclassics.com/Atari/8bit/Emulators/xlit020.zip



Atari ST

Pacifist: Emulates that one-time Amiga rival, the Atari ST. Except very slowly. Despite that, there are people out there who are content to spend a whole night

playing nothing but *Arkanoid II*. And these people should chance their arm at the following site...

• www.perso.hol.fr/~gidouin/pacifist.html

ALSO-RANS



BBC Micro

Despite the fact that it was actually a pretty decent system, the BBC Micro never enjoyed the success of the ZX Spectrum or Commodore 64. Some believe the hefty price

tag was responsible, although we prefer to blame the horrific combination of Fred Harris and *Micro Live* which irrevocably blighted the machine's credibility in the eyes of self-respecting schoolchildren the length and breadth of the country.

The BBC Lives!: Far and away the best site for all BBC Micro-related info and files, make The BBC Lives! your first port of call.

• www.nvg.unit.no/bbc/

Beebem: This is one of the best Beeb emulators around – but you'll need those pesky ROMs.

• <http://members.aol.com/mikebuk/beebem/BeebEm09.zip>



Amstrad CPC

Amstrad – crap name for a company (Alan Michael Sugar TRADING, I ask you), great idea for a computer. Well, on paper at least, the unique selling point being that

each Amstrad CPC series came complete with its own monitor (gasp!) and data storage/retrieval system



World Games from Epyx broke joysticks the world over – especially on the CBM64 and Amstrad.

MUST-SEE SITES

The following sites are, if you'll permit us to enthuse for a moment, completely brilliant. Make them your first stop on the road to retro gaming bliss:

Arrgh - The Anally Retentive's Retro Games Home

Superb design, witty writing, reams of information, fistfuls of links: Mat Johnson's Arrgh definitely leads the way in retro home-computing.

• www.arrgh.demon.co.uk/home.html

Atmospherical Heights

Another excellent site. AH mainly covers arcade games (which we'll be looking at next month), but it's well worth a visit for anyone feeling nostalgic.

• www.xs4all.nl/~delite/

Dave's Classics

Another top-quality site. Shame about the Roger Dean-style logo, mind. Perfect in every other way though.

• www.davesclassics.com/

(yelp!). Like Gary Wilmot, the CPCs were popular, but not that popular. This didn't stop it from spawning a few classic titles of its own – such as the weird isometric adventure *Get Dexter* and a cracking version of *Chase HQ*.

CPE: Sturdy, all-round Amstrad CPC emulator for DOS.

• www.davesclassics.com/Amstrad/Emulators/cpe52.zip

No Ca\$h CPC: This emulator has an added advantage: it's completely free to use.

• [ftp://kayos.reshall.ksu.edu/pub/mirrors/ar/cpc/no\\$cp486.zip](ftp://kayos.reshall.ksu.edu/pub/mirrors/ar/cpc/no$cp486.zip)



ORIC-1

With a keyboard that was actually worse than the Spectrum's and an unfamiliar programming language (FORTH) to weigh it down, the

Oric-1 was on borrowed time right from the off. Inexplicably popular in France, along with Jerry Lewis, armpit hair, and industrial action.

Oric 1 World: Multi-lingual Oric fansite, run by French enthusiasts. Includes links to many emulators and tools.

• www.ensica.fr/~frances/oric/oric_english.html



Dragon 32

Oh dear. Woe betide the poor schoolboy who received a Dragon 32 at Christmas – the home computer equivalent of a Betamax video in that it was actually a good machine. It's just that no one bought the damn things.

Dragon 32 emulator: Incredibly, there is an emulator available. Check out:

• <http://public.logica.com/~burginp/emulators.html>

NEXT MONTH: Consoles and arcade games: we take a look at what's going on. Say, did I hear someone mention Nintendo 64 emulator?





A beginner's guide to Ultima Online

— by Annette Beatwell —



How to build a dead hard character

Ultima Online is arguably the largest and most complex game environment ever created. Given the sheer scale of the world and the flexibility that the system allows the player characters, you might expect a little gameplay help, like a manual, for instance. But no – tip up your game box and all that drops out is the *Ultima Online* CD, two inadequate bits of card and a tea towel (actually, it's a map and you're going to need it, so don't go using it to mop up your spilt booze).

Starting up

You'll need an Internet account (naturally), a credit card (to pay for your account) and a copy of the game. Origin are only issuing a limited number of copies, so if you want one you may have to hunt around. Next, read the Readme file and get ready to deal with a world populated by Americans.

Ultima Online is played on a number of servers which evolve independently. At the moment there's no European server and Origin are being very evasive about when (or if) they'll be setting one up. Which unfortunately means we have to suffer in silence and



share our gameplay with a load of overbearing Yanks.

American *UO* players are annoying for three reasons: they insist that their characters speak 'ye olde English'; they've had the game for longer, so their alter-egos are a lot harder than ours; and they get free local calls. Also, the smug gits log on all day, so come 8pm the game is virtually unplayable over here. Ignore them. And console yourself that you probably have more of a life than they do. Anyway...

Creating your character

Having logged onto a server, it's now time to create your character. Just bear in mind that your beloved creation cannot change servers (worlds), so make sure you put him on a reliable one.

On the first screen you get to choose your character's name and set his statistics, which are 'Strength', 'Dexterity' and 'Intelligence'. You can use a character template to set your statistics, but it might be best to ignore this option and whack your character's Strength straight up to maximum, and Intelligence and Dexterity to minimum, regardless of whether your ambition is to eventually become a Mage (we'll explain why later).

Next, select three main character skills and set their values. Although it's tempting to go straight for three "adventurer" skills, consider becoming proficient in one of the crafts first. Once in the game, your most immediate concern will be to accumulate cash and it's both easier and safer to do this by following a trade than by marching into a dungeon right from the word go. If you must take a weapon

Essential Ultima Online sites

- www.owo.com
- www.owo.com/town/current_events/current_events.html
- <http://ultima.scorched.com/>
- www.origin.ea.com

skill, you might as well make it a high one. Tip: you can achieve a fighting skill of '25' by simply using training dummies.

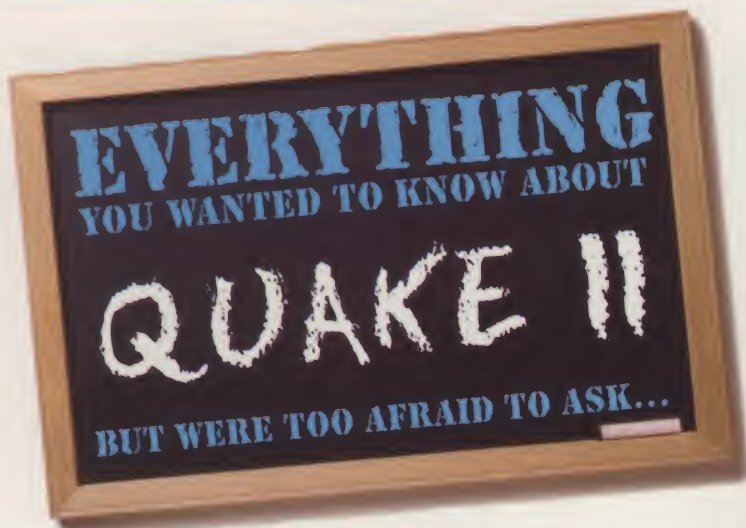
Developing your character

You arrive in the world of *UO* with 100 gold coins, a backpack and some basic equipment dictated by your starting skills. The first task is to find a shop and purchase a few essentials. Necessary tools for your character's trade? Definitely a bedroll (you'll need it if you want to 'log off' safely when away from an inn), and possibly some armour. Then it'll be time to 'train' up your character.

Statistics and skills are increased by use, although they improve at different rates. Dexterity and Intelligence are quite easy to increase by practising related skills (for example, try using your 'Anatomy' skill repeatedly on passers-by – it'll soon put your Intelligence rating up). Improving Strength, however, is very slow; if your character is born a wimp, he'll stay one. Remember too that Strength dictates a character's hit points, carrying capacity and the armour and weapons he can use. It shouldn't take long to get some decent skills, a proper weapon and some armour, then you can really kick some butt.

Start accumulating cash by practising your trade and selling the results. Do buy and sell on the open market (ie with other players), but be wary of scams. Scavenge around town too; powerful characters will often leave mundane items behind – and they're all worth money. And if you happen to find a corpse, loot it. There's no law against it... yet. **Z**





"Everything you wanted to know" says it all really. But allow **David McCandless**, the Übergruppenschurke- weiderFragMeister, to show you some of the many secrets that *Quake II* holds deep within its grimy bowels. Every level is brimming with secret areas, power-ups and goodies. Read on to find out exactly where to find them.



W

E ARE NOW IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE SPOOGE-a-thon that trumpeted the release of *Quake II*. You've spent three or four soulless days tied to your chair, headphones swilling around clammy against your head, working your way slowly and stealthily through the Strogg universe.

Now, however, it's time to mop up. Replay the game on a harder skill level (did it on easy, did we?). One of the cool thrills of *QII* is finding all the secrets. There's no better feeling than having your supercilious gamesplaying chum with his Pentium II/300MHz and 256Mb of RAM choke on his banana when you show him all the ones he hadn't come close to finding. Also, prowess of deathmatch is index-linked to your knowledge of a level: find and revise with our guide to the toughest secrets (note that we haven't included all of them, just the hard or interesting ones). So now you know where they are, go and discover the many secret levels you missed. And generally get it on...

UNIT 1 - BASE UNIT

01 Communications centre (base3)

Secret level

You've done this a zillion times. But have you found the secret level? In the pool of water there's a hole in the floor. Swim down into it (by crouching). Bear right and you should find a short passage leading to another room. Use the rebreather to survive. This leads to a secret level.

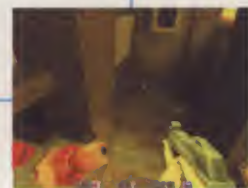
02 Lost station (train)

6 secrets

- 1 As soon as you meet the train, jump into the water underneath and swim through a secret tunnel. Beware when exiting though - nasty monsties await.
- 2 In the same area as the train, track around to find a shadowy room full of boxes. Climb on top, jump across, and crawl/jump into a space to find a silencer.
- 3 On the train's first downward motion there's a pool of water



02



beneath. Jump into this and swim around to find a lift - this takes you up to an enclosed space with secret goodies. Hurrah!

- 4 When you reach the station go round the corner and shoot the switch behind you to access the red key. If you shoot the switch and fall off the ramp, you can get underneath it.
- 5 Forge on through the level and you'll reach an area where three automated guns fire a stream of 'death pellets' at you. Shoot the switch above them to open a panel to their left.
- 6 In the room at the end with the huge pillar surrounded by water, dip underwater and shoot the walls of the pillar. One will open to reveal an invulnerability power-up.

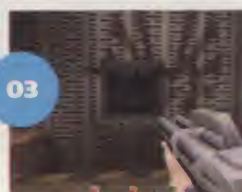
At station two, there's a grey panel which reads '35'. Go round on the lift 13 times and it will have changed into... well, wait and see.

UNIT 2 - WAREHOUSE UNIT

03 Ammo depot (bunk1)

3 secrets

- 1 In the first room there are two large crates stacked in the far-left corner. Jump on these and look directly up. Shoot the switch and a nearby panel will open.
- 2 In the room where you activate a hydraulic battering ram to smash a door, there's a second green switch on the wall near the window in the control room. This opens a panel in the floor behind you.



03



3 Just before you enter the supply station, shoot the black crate on the right. It explodes, revealing a drop-down entrance to the room blocked off with laser.

04 Supply station (ware1)

3 secrets

- 1 Immediately you need to drop down over the edge and head for the left-hand corner. A panel will slide open and reveal some armour.
- 2 In the first major room, a crate emerges from the wall and does a circuit of the room. Inside the nook it comes from is a Quad power-up. Either jump on the box or push a fuel drum over to the hole to get it.

05 Warehouse (ware2)

2 secrets

- 1 Once you've powered up the entire warehouse, you end up flicking a switch to create a spiral staircase – there is a window half-way down it. You can just see some barrels and a switch behind them – shoot it and a further layer of spiral staircase will appear, leading to some goodies.
- 2 In the final room there are two moving platforms that you must use to hurdle across the crates. To the left is a glassed-off room with an obvious grate positioned high up on the wall. There's also a switch on the ceiling if you look close enough. Shoot it for access.

JAIL UNIT

06 Detention centre (jail2)

2 secrets

- 1 In the room opposite the Quad damage protected by laser (inside the security complex proper) is a flight of stairs leading to another room. Behind you, as you go up, is a switch. Shoot it and dash down very quickly and you should be able to get under the steps. Bingo – a secret.

07 Security complex (jail3)

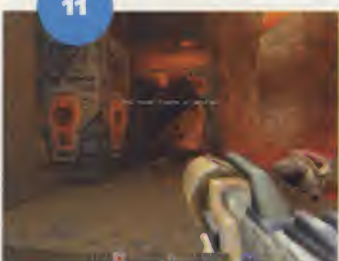
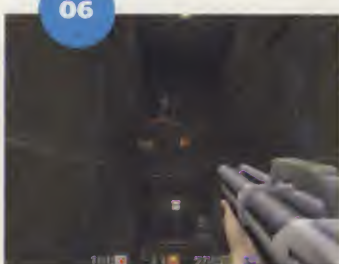
1 secret

- 1 Take the left-hand passage when you arrive and just around the corner in a room full of computers is a wall panel you can shoot open.

08 Torture chambers (jail4)

3 secrets

- 1 In cell block A, inside the second cell on the left, is a secret passage in front of the mad marine. Shoot him to gain access to an invulnerability.
- 2 Use this invulnerability to jump into the huge lava pit; there's loads of cool stuff in there.



09 Guard house (jail5)

3 secrets

- 1 In the second room there are some barrels and crates. Shoot these to reveal a secret crawl space.
- 2 The staircase leads to a plaza. On the left is a small block sticking out from the wall. Press it to get some stuff.
- 3 From this same area, drop down onto the walkway below and go through the door. Blow up the barrels and crawl through the gap in the broken door. This leads to a secret area.

10 Grid control (security)

No secrets but good for deathmatch

MINE UNIT

11 Mine entrance (mintro)

1 secret

- 1 Walk round the level until you come to a walkway marked by a chunk of armour. To your left is a flashing orange wall. Shoot it to get the rocket launcher.

12 Upper mines (mine1)

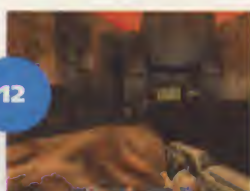
2 secrets

- 1 In the room with the ventilation switch, you'll see a sparking computer on the left. Shoot it to get a Quad damage.

13 Borehole (mine2)

3 secrets

- 1 In the same room, a pit leads to some water. Swim down into it. A submerged secret awaits.
- 2 After activating the drill you'll be attacked by some Cyborgs. One of them comes out of a thin exploding side passage. Shoot the wall in here for further secrets.



14



14 Drilling area (mine3)

2 secrets

1 Just near the lift to the factory is a stack of crates. Climb up these to reach an item hidden in the shadows.

FACTORY UNIT

15 Receiving area (fact1)

4 secrets

1 After a convoluted journey through some red tunnels, you'll emerge in a room where three mini-lifts will pop you over the side of a wall. Immediately in front will be a wall with a suspiciously different texture...

2 Following the route of the level, you'll cross a lava bridge and emerge on an outside walkway. Drop down over the edge into some thigh-high water and a secret.

3 In the same bit you can run and jump (or rocket jump) the waterfall. This leads to a secret entrance to a more secret level.

16 Processing plant (fact2)

3 secrets

1 The first lift you come to rams you into deadly spikes if you don't leap off soon enough. In the room you jump into there's a door through an archway. As you walk through the arch, look up and you'll see a light. Shoot it and a panel will open.

2 A little way beyond this is the first grinding machine. Deactivate it and then turn right and walk off the ramp into the lava below. Jump quickly on the platform to discover a secret Quad.

3 When you turn off the treadmill, crawl into the space it came from.

POWER UNIT/BIG GUN

17 Cooling facility (cool1)

3 secrets

1 You'll get here from the water system. When the water starts going downhill, you'll see a ladder. Jump over the side.

2 In the end cavern, ride the lift to the top and then drop down onto the ledge below. From here you can jump onto the platform with the health.

3 Mega secret. When you activate the second coolant control, drop back down to the first wheel you had to turn. A room will have opened up with some cool stuff.

Cheat codes

Hit **~** (tilde key), as you would in *Quake*, and type these commands to get weapons and items as described.

Give all
Give blaster
Give bullets
Give cells
Give grenadelauncher
Give grenades
Give invulnerability
Give jacketarmor
Give machinegun
Give mines
Give nuke
Give quad
Give rebreather
Give rocketlauncher
Give rockets
Give shells
Give shotgun
Give silencer
Give slugs
Give sshotgun
God
Noclip
notarget

15



17



NOTE Remember the dopefish in *Quake*? It's in here too. When you've blown the reactor come back here (before doing the big gun). Go out to the outdoor pools near the end. In one pool a secret door has appeared. You can take it from there.

18 Toxic waste dump (waste1)

2 secrets

1 There are loads of obvious secrets hidden in the toxic waste here. Get a suit and get exploring.

2 Same for this one. Get the suit and go diving.

18



19 Pumping station 1 (waste2)

3 secrets

1 Take the first lift to the next room – shoot the flashing light.

2 There's a noticeable crack in one of the strangely-textured pipes. Blow it and jump in via the crates.

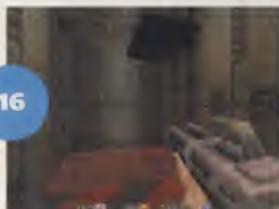
3 Follow the pipe tunnels to end up in a spooky outside bit. Shoot both grates to gain a Quad.

20 Pumping station 2 (waste3)

4 secrets

1 Next to the blue key door is a panel. Shoot it; this is a secret, although it doesn't register as such (it's a bug).

16



19





- 2 At the end of the same hallway, just drop off the edge to find a BFG.
- 3 There's a room below the control room. Shoot the floor.
- 4 At the end, there's a deep pool of toxin. Half-way down, inside the gook, is a Quad.

HANGAR UNIT

21 Outer hangar (hangar1)

3 secrets

- 1 In the room below the start room, there's a pipe in one corner. Jump over this to reach an adrenaline patch.
- 2 In the next room, dispatch the sea monsters and then shoot the power line underwater to disable the fan. Swim beyond it to reach the secret area and the entrance to the hidden level.

22 Research lab (lab)

NOTE In the first room, there are two windows. One is blood-stained. If you kill all the marines on the level (including those being tortured) the glass will read "Kill Me". Shoot the glass and go inside...

23 Inner hanger (hanger2)

5 secrets

- 1 Enter level. Turn left. Spot sparking computer. Shoot it.
- 2 Past the water wheel and into the next room, there are three hexagonal crates against one wall – you need to shoot the nearest one.
- 3 In the bit with the sliding blocks in the water, flick the switch for the lift and then drop down into the water at your feet. There's a submarine secret area underneath.

24 Launch command (command)

2 secrets

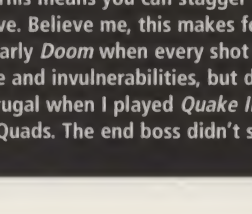
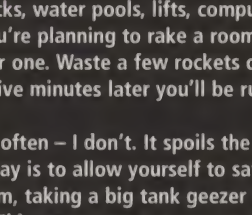
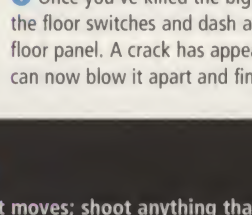
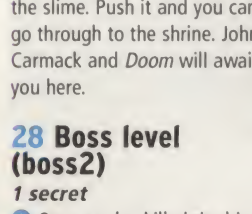
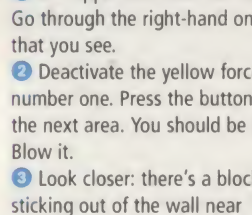
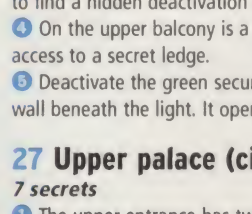
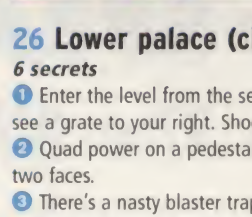
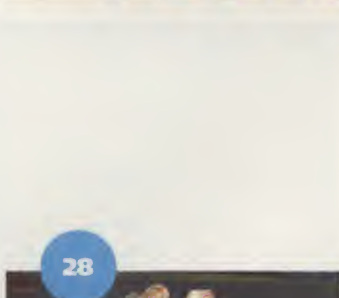
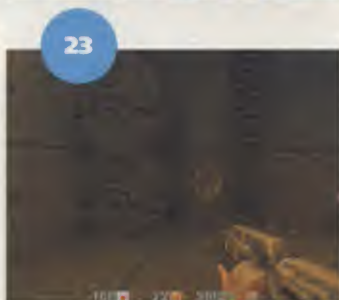
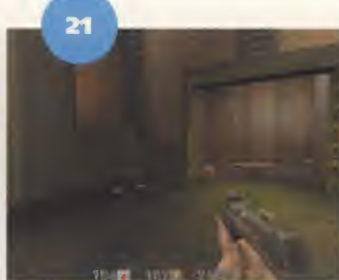
- 1 See the spinning contact rings. Rocket jump behind this for a secret.
- 2 Near to the exit there are two glass walls. The glass on the left has a crack in it. You know exactly what to do.

CITY UNIT

25 Outer courts (city1)

5 secrets

- 1 Climb the cliff tops and work your way around. The button on top of the Aztec-looking doorway opens a passage back in the start room.
- 2 When you find the data spinner step on the button next to it. A panel behind opens. The button inside extends the bridge.
- 3 After deactivating the red force fields in the Lower Palace, come back to this level and jump in the water. Go through the first tunnel and then come up for air. Behind you, above the surface, is a stash that was previously protected by a red force field.



26 Lower palace (city2)

6 secrets

- 1 Enter the level from the sewers of the outer court. You'll see a grate to your right. Shoot it open.
- 2 Quad power on a pedestal? It's easy – you just shoot the two faces.
- 3 There's a nasty blaster trap here. Examine the wall carefully to find a hidden deactivation switch.
- 4 On the upper balcony is a yellow computer. Shoot it to gain access to a secret ledge.
- 5 Deactivate the green security door and then push on the wall beneath the light. It opens a room down the corridor.

27 Upper palace (city3)

7 secrets

- 1 The upper entrance has two force fields to deactivate. Go through the right-hand one and look up. Shoot the switch that you see.
- 2 Deactivate the yellow force fields and then return to secret number one. Press the button inside to lower the stairs into the next area. You should be able to see a decaying brick wall. Blow it.
- 3 Look closer: there's a block sticking out of the wall near the slime. Push it and you can go through to the shrine. John Carmack and Doom will await you here.

28 Boss level (boss2)

1 secret

- 1 Once you've killed the big boss (easy, huh?), step on one of the floor switches and dash across to go through the opposite floor panel. A crack has appeared in a wall down here and you can now blow it apart and find a hall of fame.

General playing tips

It's pretty simple: shoot anything that moves; shoot anything that looks like it's going to move; shoot wall panels, barrels, cracks, water pools, lifts, computers. Shoot every freaking thing. But conserve your ammo. If you're planning to rake a room while questing for secrets, use the peashooter – weapon number one. Waste a few rockets on a fruitless quest for hidden power-ups and, guaranteed, five minutes later you'll be running away from a big alien mutha – screaming.

Most people like to save and save often – I don't. It spoils the flow of the game and makes it too easy. The best way to play is to allow yourself to save only after achieving certain objectives (clearing out a room, taking a big tank geezer etc), but forcing yourself to save *no matter what your health*. This means you can stagger from a fire-fight with about five per cent health, but you must save. Believe me, this makes for a much more exciting game and recalls the heady days of early *Doom* when every shot counted.

By all means save up Quad damage and invulnerabilities, but don't sit on them for the entire game. I was being especially frugal when I played *Quake II* at first. By the time I got to the end boss I had six – yes, six – Quads. The end boss didn't stand a chance.

TROUBLESHOOTER!



Incubation

Part 2 - The Nightmare Levels

Some of the missions in this game can prove too much for even the most battle-hardened space marine - so it's just as well that **Chris Anderson** is on hand with a guide to the most difficult ones.



01

01 Power station

Note: Before you enter the power station, make sure that your squad is optimally equipped to take on the next three missions - they all take place in this area, and you won't have an opportunity to re-equip them until the completion of the third mission.

Available: Three containers with equipment points and one container with an extra (+1) condition point (only for the unit that opens the container).

This one looks more difficult than it really is. Send a marine to the control panel located directly to the left and position the rest of your squad on the platform. In the next round, activate the platform. This will bring the Gore'Ther into position - by now this should be routine. Select one marine who will control the platforms and move him to the control panel on the right. The rest of your squad should be moved to the platform to the left. You can activate the control panel as soon as your squad has vacated the first platform and your other marine, located at the original control panel, has moved onto the platform that was previously occupied by the Gore'Ther. When you've positioned all your units on the top-left platform, rest your troops - they're going to need it.

Now you need to activate the left control panel, which will move the platform over to the other side. Place your entire squad on defence mode and let the Scay'Ger come to you.

After these have been eliminated, send one of your marines directly to the room to the right and line up the rest against the second wall. The first soldier should bait the Gore'Ther out of the room and into position - use the platform to provide an optimum distance of safety. Keeping your units along the second wall, you should use the first marine to bait first the Gore'Ther to the right and then the ones to the left - at this point it's a duck shoot. Be careful however that you don't kill the last Gore'Ther before you've opened all the containers.

02 Dr Reich

Available: Three containers with ammunition, nine with equipment points, and one with an extra talent point for both light and heavy weapons.

In this mission, you'll need to calculate your movements precisely - especially in the beginning. Your opponents consist of Gore'Ther, Ray'Ther, and a new variety known as Cy'Coo; they don't move but eject a deadly fluid that kills anything it hits. They target the hindmost position, but if you consistently move your units, they should pose no other difficulty. You can't attack them successfully unless they attack you first, and then only in defence mode.





02

03



shouldn't allow two Ray'Ther to occupy the same span – if they're allowed to collapse, you won't be able to get to the other side and you'll fail the mission. When the Gore'Ther have been neutralised, it's hunting season on Ray'Ther. Dr Reich is in the room to the left; in the room to the right you'll find your bonus package, but be sure that you can enter the room in one round.

03 Escort Dr Reich

Available: One ammunition container, one with an extra (+1) condition point, and four with equipment points.

It doesn't matter if there's one or five Cy'Coo because they all fire at the hindmost target, as is the case in this mission. Position your marines in such a way that all but two can be moved to new locations on the same platform. Those that remain on the platform should be able to hit targets that are at long range. A marine with a flame-thrower should move down to the control panel, but not activate it until the second round. The other should move out onto the unstable span to the right. The rest move to new locations on the start platform – don't worry about the two Gore'Ther near this location. Activate the control panel in the second round and, with the remaining action points, the marine should fry the approaching Ray'Ther near his location and move one space. The units on the platform should concentrate on the Ray'Ther located where the platform stops. The unit on the unstable span should kill as many as possible of the Ray'Ther



To complicate the mission, there are spans of walkway that give way if two objects occupy the same area. Deploy your units on a platform that automatically moves over to two parallel spans of walkways. In the middle, two spans run perpendicular and lead to a large area that harbours the Cy'Coo and the Ray'Ther. To the left and right you'll find two pairs of Gore'Ther.

Leave one person on the platform to act as a decoy, not only for the Cy'Coo (keep moving) but also for the Gore'Ther. Send decoys to the left and to the right and the rest to positions in the middle. Bait the two pairs of Gore'Ther down to the span adjacent to the deployment platform. As soon as they've moved decisively in that direction, the units in the middle should move out to positions on the second parallel walkway span that enables them to get in behind the advancing Gore'Ther. They'll also need to contend with Ray'Ther advancing from the large area directly in front. Both spans leading to the large area are unstable and you

approaching with the Gore'Ther from the east. The marine at the control panel acts as bait not only for the Gore'Ther but also for the Cy'Coo, so don't forget to keep him moving. As soon as the units on the start platform have eliminated the Ray'Ther in the north, they can eliminate the two Gore'Ther near the start position and open the containers located in the north. The marine with the flame-thrower then acts as bait for the Gore'Ther approaching from the east. After you've eliminated the Gore'Ther, it's just a simple march to the east. Your bonus is located in the area behind the three Cy'Coo.

04 Rutherford's solo mission

Available: Two containers with ammunition and 12 with equipment points.

Move Rutherford near to the wall in the east. With the jetpack, she should land inside the room but behind the small wall that juts out. Rest her until the weapon cools down and repeat the action for the second room. After the third room, pick ammunition and go to the east sector of the mission area. Eliminate the Ray'Coo waiting around the corner before jumping into the room. Jump into the centre of the room for cover. Start with the west section of the room. Take your shots and move back undercover. With the western section secure, rest up and then move into the other side of the room.

05 Halls II

Available: Three containers with ammunition, one with extra talent points for light and heavy weapons, one for technical weapons, and 11 with equipment points.

Clear the deployment area (two Pry'Coo and one Ee'Ther) before moving into the room in the centre – in this position, you have more of both plus some Dec'Ther falling from the ceiling. Use the grenade launcher to prepare the way, open the door and let the rapid-fire machine guns do the rest. If you don't succeed in killing all the Pry'Coo, close the door and wait for the next round before entering or leaving the centre room. In this one, you should never rely on just one method – plan back-up measures. The destination area has two more Ee'Ther.

The bonuses are located to the west of the deployment grid on the other side of the wall and behind the containers in the deployment area against the wall in the east.



04



06 Spaceport I

NB No containers available.

Your deployment area is surrounded by Scay'Ger. Eliminate the Pry'Coo and Dec'Ther in the area, and then take cover behind the big container on the edge of the platform. The Pry'Coo that can't wait to be blown to bits will of course come to you. In the meantime, it's target practice on the Dec'Ther. When the situation has calmed down, move your squad around the north end of the platform. You'll find firing lanes to eliminate the remaining Scay'Ger.



06

05



07 Spaceport II (final mission)

NB No containers available.

The Boss, a giant spider, is coming – did you really think you'd get out without confronting him? Move your squad off the ramp and over to the east (safe is safe). As soon as the Boss shows up, use your high-energy laser in B-Mode to paralyse him.

Now, in combination with your grenade launcher and multi-target destroyer, you can comfortably blow that bad-ass spider to bits. The Dec'Ther in the area and those falling from the ceiling all add colour to the spectacle – there's nothing like victory. **Z**

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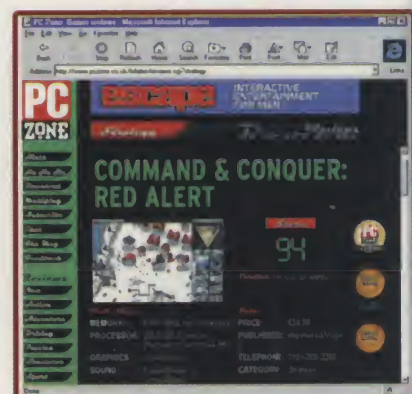
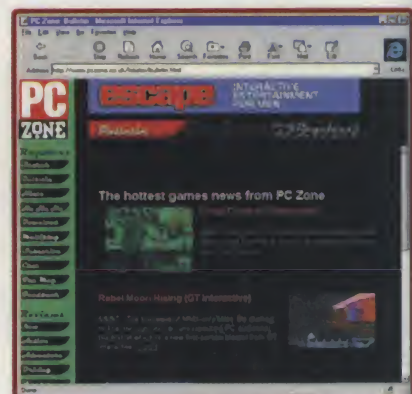
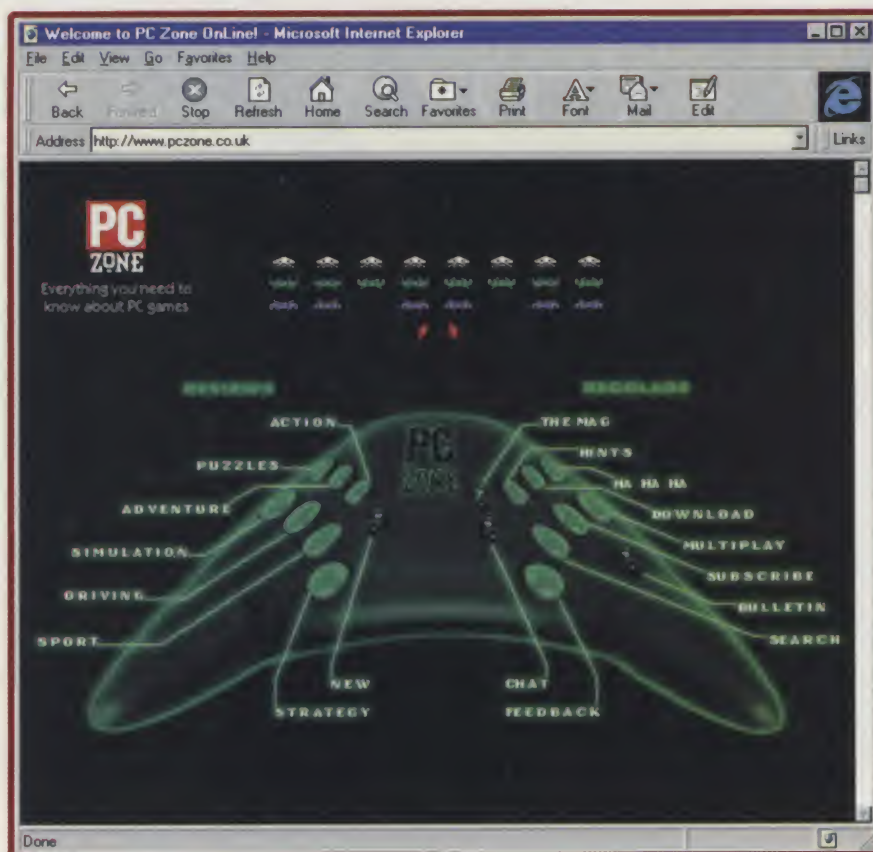
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

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Tech ZONE

Next-generation 3D imminent

At last we have visual evidence to back up claims from both PowerVR and 3Dfx that their new 3D cards will soon be with us. The mind boggles at the impact this will have on 3D games: will developers put this new technology to intelligent use and further the cause for an original game experience, or are we about to see yet another stream of games favouring style over content?

Chris Anderson reports.



K Rally was recently demonstrated in arcade form at the Amusement Trade Exhibition International. This will be one of the first games to use PowerVR 2.



IT'S HISTORY IN THE MAKING: 1997 WILL be remembered as the year the PC finally came of age as a fully-fledged games machine. Any fairly competent PC (P120 or better) equipped with a 3Dfx or PowerVR card can now display graphics to rival, if not surpass, the best that consoles have to offer – and that includes the N64.

This agreeable state of affairs is about to become rosier still following announcements from both 3Dfx and PowerVR that their second-generation technology is now imminent. Unfortunately though, there's a darker implication to the advent of these new technological developments. Videogames in general have been around for such a long time that developers now find it increasingly difficult to dream up original ideas – and this would presumably account for the endless *Quake* and *Red Alert* clones we've seen appearing with alarming regularity over the last year or two.

If anything though, the next-generation graphics cards

could conceivably make the situation worse. Picture this: a development team that has run out of fresh ideas is sitting round the table discussing which direction their next project should take. "Let's do a *Red Alert* clone in 3D," suggests developer A. "Nah, everyone's doing that. Let's take the original concept and do it in 3D," replies developer B, who then adds, "It'll probably be the next big thing, and we don't have to do much to it because it'll look so good under Voodoo 2 and PowerVR 2 that no one will notice its lack of originality." And so their problem is solved. Onward they march with not a single idea between them, but they can at least feel smug in knowing that the latest in 3D technology will make up for their creative shortcomings.

Maybe this hypothetical scenario is a bit cynical, but games such as *Uprising!* and *Sub Culture* have exploited 3D technology to the point where people are now impressed by



Quake II clearly benefits from 3Dfx's advanced lighting features. Makes you wonder what iD will be able to achieve with Voodoo 2...

just the cosmetics alone. And it's only when you then delve deeper into these games that realisation strikes – you're not seeing anything you haven't seen a thousand times before.

Don't despair just yet though, there are already games in development that apparently favour the reverse. *Populous III* has the potential to be a perfect example, as it uses 3D technology to enhance what is already a highly playable and addictive game concept. And of course, there are games like *Quake II* that use gorgeous coloured lighting to devastating effect courtesy of 3Dfx and co. You can be reasonably assured then, that for every game that jumps aboard the 3D bandwagon with scant regard for gameplay, there'll be plenty more using the technology the way it was intended: as a means to an end rather than a poor excuse for a lack of imagination.

On some fronts then, the arrival of Voodoo 2 and PowerVR 2 will give us much cause for celebration. The first titles to embrace these new chips are already filtering through, and you should be familiar with one of the first, as the last few months have seen it championed in the pages of this very magazine...

Incoming!

Rage's forthcoming 3D shoot 'em up *Incoming!* has raised many an eyebrow in the PC Zone office (see also our *Rage* feature on page 40). It is perhaps inevitable to learn that this will be one of the first games to use Voodoo 2 technology. You can expect it to be pretty smart then, as 3Dfx claim their new chip has three times the power of their existing one, and it will also support resolutions up to 1024x768, whereas current 3Dfx cards can only muster 800x600. This significant increase in power will presumably be of enormous help to low-end Pentiums, although it's pretty safe to say that you can expect the standard RAM requirement to rise to 32Mb.

The good news on the software front is that games



Videologic's Trevor Wing is confident their pricing policy for PowerVR 2 will give them a marked advantage over Voodoo 2.

currently supporting 3Dfx will also be supported by the new card. Videologic, for one, predict a similar increase in power for their next card and reckon it has a higher spec than that already predicted for Voodoo 2. They are also citing DirectX 6 support as vital to their strategy because the majority of games developers will be utilising it to the full (we'll have more on this next month).

Lift and support

As ever, the deciding factor in the continuing 3D wars will be software support. Videologic seem unphased by the fact that software publishers are already queuing up to provide native support for Voodoo 2, while news of games with PowerVR 2 native support has yet to reach our office. This is somewhat disconcerting news though, because it was 3Dfx's early support for their card that won them the first round of the battle, although it remains to be seen how many publishers will respond to PowerVR 2 when it does finally become publicly available. Check out next month's *Tech Zone* for a full-on review of the new Voodoo 2 card, when we'll also be visiting Videologic for an exclusive look at the games currently in development for PowerVR 2. ④

Incoming! utilises the power of Voodoo 2, which apparently has three times the power of 3Dfx.



Price wars

VOODOO 2 WILL GO ON SALE IN THE STATES FOR around \$300, which translates as £250-plus for the UK. Not what you'd call cheap then, and Videologic intend to use this pricing factor to their advantage. PowerVR cards are already cheaper than 3Dfx cards, and there'll be two versions for the PC released: a high-end card to compete with Voodoo 2, and a low-cost card to bring next-generation 3D acceleration to the masses. Videologic hope that this strategy will gain them the majority of the market share by covering all angles. We shall see...



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PC ZONE

Welcome to the *PC Zone* Recommended section. Here you'll find the cream of the games we've painstakingly reviewed and picked out over the years, plus those we feel should go down in PC gaming history as all-time Classics.

W

ELCOME TO THE PC ZONE RECOMMENDS section. It is here that you will find, what are, in our considered opinion, the very best games ever released for the PC.

In an effort to keep it simple, we've spilt it up into genres: Action games, Sports simulations, Adventure games, Flight simulations, Driving games, Role-playing games and Strategy games.

The top ten games of each genre are then listed, with a brief summary of the game, review score, publisher and contact number. Most of the games listed here were awarded *PC Zone* Classic status (90 per cent and above), and some managed a *PC Zone* Recommended award (80

per cent and above) at the time that they were reviewed. To achieve the highest accolade, a game must not only be very playable, entertaining and offer long-term appeal, but it must also be original and/or offer something new and worthwhile to the genre. To this end, we've included some sequels, which although scored lower than the original title, are deemed better games (they didn't get a higher score 'cos it had already been done and therefore they weren't exactly bursting with originality – okay?), so this guide isn't a list of the highest scoring games ever reviewed by *PC Zone*, but a guide to the best games now available.

When you're reading the reviews in the rest of the magazine, please remember to bear this section in mind. The highest scoring game is supposed to represent a benchmark in a particular genre, and we will always be comparing new games with this, in accordance with the above criteria. As a result, you will

see games dropping out of this section as new and better titles are released, so keep your eyes peeled for new entries in each of the genres.

Jeremy Wells, Editor

Recommended

Action



QUAKE II (97)

The sequel to "the most important PC game ever" turns out to be more than worth the wait. Despite the odd bit of slowdown, single-player and deathmatch games are in a league of their own. As Macca concluded in his review: "Quake II is pretty much perfect." Buy it now.

Publisher:

Activision (01895 456700)



TOMB RAIDER II (94)

The first game broke the mould, but the sequel even improves on the original. *Tomb Raider II* sports a curvier Lara, massive new levels to explore and a tidier control system. The game comes with native 3Dfx support and looks better than ever.

Publisher:

Core/Eidos (0181 636 3000)



JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES II (94)

It's not *Quake*, but then it doesn't even try to be. But it is a compelling, technically superb blend of action and exploration wrapped up in the *Star Wars* universe. Altogether most impressive.

Publisher:

LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



HEXEN II (94)

The long-awaited, hub-based gib-fest sweeps into action with its trusty sword, hoping to carve a big 'H' on the chest of its older cousin, *Quake*. This is a first-person hack 'em off with balls as well as a big chopper.

Publisher:

Activision (01895 456700)



FADE TO BLACK (94)

The unofficial sequel to the excellent *Flashback*, this is a near-perfect blend of third-person exploration and combat action. The technical precursor to the fantastic *Tomb Raider*, it's a classic in its own right.

Publisher:

Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



DUKE NUKEM 3D (93)

The debate rages on, and there are still an awful lot of people who rate *Duke* over *Quake*. It's not as technically impressive, but brags gameplay by the bucketload in one-player mode and when played over a network.

Publisher:

Eidos Interactive (0181 636 3000)



PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING (94)

The ultimate mix of space combat, *Elite*-style trading and FMV action, *Privateer 2* was the first big budget release from Origin to use live action in a positive way. Packed with stars, this is pukka stuff.

Publisher:

Origin/EA (01753 549442)



MAGIC CARPET 2 (92)

The original wooed us with its speed and smoothness – this is even better, with new night-time bits, monsters and a very useful on-line help system. Technically exquisite, the game engine's yet to be bettered.

Publisher:

Bullfrog/EA (01753 549442)



TIE FIGHTER (94)

Still rated by many as the finest space combat sim ever released, it successfully blends all the kudos of *Star Wars* with a wicked new engine for super-fast *TIE* on *X-Wing* fisticuffs.

Publisher:

LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



WING COMMANDER: PROPHECY (88)

Wing Prophecy is far more linear than *Privateer 2*, but still packs an almighty gaming punch in the grolleys with its stunning sci-fi blasting action, dazzling special effects and ever-twisting storyline.

Publisher:

Electronic Arts (01753 549442)

PC
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Recommended

Driving



CARMAGEDDON (95)

Awesome arcade-style racer that's heavy on the hit 'n' run and gameplay. Loads of different cars to choose from, plenty of tracks, three ways to play and a fab multi-player network mode make this one of the most entertaining driving games ever.

Publisher:
SCI (0171 585 3308)



NASCAR RACING 2 (92)

A worthy upgrade featuring a new, smoother 3D engine, improved opponent AI, more controllable cars, a simple single-screen car set-up and a multi-player network option. The constant stream of headset messages adds atmosphere. A racing sim fan's must.

Publisher:
Sierra (0118 920 9100)



NETWORK Q RAC RALLY (94)

The seminal rally racer from Europress is the ultimate in skiddy, slidey action. 27 (count 'em) stages, loads of cars, a fantastic eight-way network option and varied terrain and conditions make this superior to the limited Sega Rally. Go buy it!

Publisher:
Europress Software (01625 859444)



GRAND THEFT AUTO (92)

This is the game that took over from Carmageddon as the media's favourite pet hate. Steal cars, dodge police, mow down pedestrians and cause mayhem in city streets in one of the most addictive driving games ever. Micro Machines on acid.

Publisher:
BMG (0171 384 7100)



MICRO MACHINES 2 (93)

The console classic is converted to the PC as new tracks provide a new challenge. The easy-to-use control system means it's user-friendly for the uninitiated. This version comes with a track designer.

Publisher:
Codemasters (01926 814132)



SCREAMER RALLY (91)

The Screamer games just get better. This is by far the best version, with its mad undulating tracks and high-speed courses. As well as 3Dfx support and network play, there's also a split-screen option.

Publisher:
VIE (0171 368 2255)



F1 RACING SIMULATION (93)

The sheer depth of realism is what makes F1 Racing Sim such an outstanding experience to play. Not only that, but it looks an absolute treat too – especially 3Dfx-ed up. A Crammond-beater.

Publisher:
Ubi Soft (0181 944 9000)



POD (90)

One of the first racing games to support 3Dfx, Direct3D and MMX. With awesome graphics and with new cars, tracks and power-ups promised to be posted regularly on the Internet, you'll never get bored.

Publisher:
Ubi Soft (0181 944 9000)



FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2 (92)

The amazing sequel to the greatest F1 driving sim ever. Updated brilliantly for the 94/95 season with all-new detailed circuits, cars and teams. Ninja Pentium needed to run the hi-res mode – but it's still great.

Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)



INDYCAR 2 (90)

If you don't mind going round and round in circles but still crave that unbelievable detail, this is the only real alternative to F1GP2. Technically mind-blowing, though a little chuggy on anything but a high-end Pentium in SVGA mode.

Publisher:
Sierra (0118 920 9100)

Sports



LINKS LS (94)

The classic golf sim gets an update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more options, luscious graphics, a redesigned menu and a view selection system. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.

Publisher:
Eidos Interactive (0181 636 3000)



PRO PINBALL: TIMESHOCK! (91)

Remember *Pro Pinball: The Web*? This, the second table in the series, is better in every way. Improved ball dynamics, detail and sound effects, and of course there's the return of the world's dirtiest computer game voice telling you to "Lock those balls".

Publisher:
Empire Interactive (0181 343 7337)



NHL 98 (94)

Another year, another *NHL*, but this one isn't just the best ice hockey game, it's one of the best sports games we've ever seen. Super 3Dfx-ed graphics, fantastic animation and awesome presentation make this a sports title not to be missed.

Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)



VIRTUAL POOL 2 (90)

Okay, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3Dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.

Publisher:
Interplay (01628 423666)



PGA TOUR PRO (94)

Nothing really distinguishes this version from the last, except for the brilliant and very easy to use Internet play facility. Waste no time, go and thwack some Americans now. Your country needs you.

Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)



ACTUA SOCCER 2 (90)

Instantly accessible footy action in this latest instalment of Gremlin's high profile *Actua* series. Great graphics, easy control and a hidden Super Furry Animals team confirm *Actua 2*'s 'must have' status.

Publisher:
Gremlin Interactive (01142 753423)



NBA LIVE 98 (93)

With even better graphics and commentary than before, it's one of the best-looking PC sports games. This version sports 'realistic' faces and players of different heights – it's by far the best basketball game available.

Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)



SENSIBLE SOCCER 2000 (90)

Can the best get better? In this case: yes. Sensible sensibly decided to leave the gameplay intact for this version of their classic game. Result? A classic update of the most playable footie game ever.

Publisher:
GT Interactive (0171 258 3791)



PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS 97 (92)

This game doesn't quite better *Super Tennis* on the SNES, but it's as close as you'll get on the PC. The simple control system means it's instantly playable, but we may as well tell you now that the women's skirts still don't fly up when they serve.

Publisher:
Codemasters (01926 814132)



MADDEN NFL 98 (87)

This latest PC incarnation is well up to the quality seen on the console versions, with all the features and slick presentation we now expect as standard for an EA Sports release. When it comes down to it, it doesn't really get any better than this.

Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)

Adventures



ALONE IN THE DARK 3 (95)

Better than the previous *AITD* instalments, *Alone 3* is a tense, ambient tale of Navajo Indian magic and reincarnation that unfolds in the usual *AITD* manner. Now available as part of a compilation budget pack.

Publisher:
Infogrames (0181 738 8199)



INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS (93)

Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metropolis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.

Publisher:
LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



BIOFORGE (95)

Futuristic *Alone In The Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *AITD* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it.

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



LBA 2: TWINSEEN'S ODYSSEY (93)

Twinsen, the sprite with the egg-shaped head, is back – this time to thwart those pesky Esmers in this sumptuous sequel. The huge play area, coupled with seamlessly linked puzzles, creates a great looking and atmospheric adventure.

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



SYSTEM SHOCK (95)

This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the game. The graphics might be a little dated, but the atmosphere is invigorating.

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



SAM & MAX (93)

Steve Purcell's hilarious dog/rabbit 'freelance police' duo's first and only PC outing, in which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase even if you're not a massive point-and-click fan.

Publisher:
LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



STAR TREK TNG: A FINAL UNITY (94)

A style oozier. At times it's as if you're inside a *Star Trek* TNG episode. Non-linear and beautifully presented, it's a Trek-head must-buy. Yet to be bettered.

Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)



THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND (92)

The third game in LucasArts' classic *Monkey* saga delivers the goods big-time, much to the relief of adventure fans everywhere.

Publisher:
Virgin (0171 368 2255)



DISCWORLD II (93)

Perfect Entertainment's immaculate sequel to *Discworld* follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. *Discworld II* is a universally appealing adventure game.

Publisher:
Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)



ECSTATICA II (90)

We dubbed it "An adventure with balls". It's hard, but it's one of the most rewarding adventures that we've ever seen. It constantly surprises and is sure to keep even the most battle-weary adventure fan busy for weeks.

Publisher:
Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)

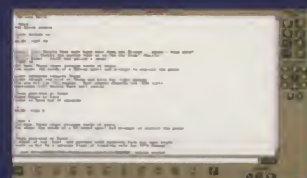
Role-Playing Games



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS (94)

This improves on almost every aspect of its prequel, *The Stygian Abyss*. You explore a complex, ever-evolving dungeon; it has unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction.

Publisher:
Origin/EA (01753 549442)



TERRIS (88)

A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but so addictive we're still playing it. The quests, puzzles and monsters will keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent, if you can handle the 'texty-ness'.

Publisher:
AOL (0800 279 7444)



REALMS OF THE HAUNTING (93)

Although overlooked by many fans of the genre, our Mallo gave it a whopping 93 per cent when he reviewed it some months ago. Still well worth a look if you happen to see it going cheap. *ROTH* is a well cool mix of adventure and RPG.

Publisher:
Gremlin Interactive (01142 753423)



MERIDIAN 59 (86)

This ground-breaking on-line RPG allows thousands of people to interact with each other in the same fantasy universe at the same time. Garish and horrible graphics aside, it's one of the best on-line multi-player RPGs around.

Publisher:
3DO Company (0181 296 1949)



LANDS OF LORE: GUARDIANS OF DESTINY (92)

Four long years in the making, Westwood Studios' mammoth new adventure proved more than worth the wait. Sumptuous visuals and a tremendous atmosphere combine to make *Lands Of Lore* an undeniable instant classic.

Publisher:
VIE (0171 368 2255)



RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET (78)

A great improvement overSSI's previous AD&D *Ravenloft* RPGs, the player has to battle his way through a landscape populated by Stone Golems and vicious scorpions. The graphics are average but the intuitive spell/combat system is a joy.

Publisher:
Mindscape (01444 246333)



ULTIMA VII (89)

Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction and the exploration of the world of Britannia. The last *Ultima* series to give complete party control. Soon to be *Ultima Online*.

Publisher:
Origin/EA (01753 549442)



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS (PRE-PC ZONE)

This took RPGs away from first-person tile-based RPGs. Amazing architecture, witty characterisations, layers of storyline and the best ending of any game in history.

Publisher:
Origin/EA (01753 549442)



DIABLO (88)

Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but it's pulled off with such style that the overall game experience is addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game.

Publisher:
Zabrac/Blizzard (01626 332233)



EYE OF THE BEHOLDER II (PRE-PC ZONE)

An 'olde-worlde' first-person RPG, but its progressive, party-based gameplay and subtle story elements set it apart from the other dross. The flick-screen graphics are dated, but dungeon design's worth a look.

Publisher:
VIE (0171 368 2255)

Strategy



DUNGEON KEEPER (96)

A game with a genre almost impossible to define, DK takes *SimCity 2000*, C&C and *Ultima Underworld* and remoulds them into one hell of a title. Fantastic gameplay, and a lifespan on a par with the Queen Mother.

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



INCUBATION (94)

Deeply atmospheric turn-based strategy game with graphics to die for. This is a welcome change from the endless stream of C&C clones and is as challenging as it's action-packed.

Publisher:
Blue Byte (01604 232200)



SYNDICATE WARS (95)

One of the best strategy games of all time gets a sequel, and what a fabulous sequel it is too. It houses a wealth of intricate levels, gorgeous graphics and enough gratuitous violence to keep anyone happy.

Publisher:
EA/Bullfrog (01753 549442)



AGE OF EMPIRES (94)

Think of *Civilization 2*. Imagine the same great empire-building gameplay, some excellent graphical touches and comprehensive multi- and single-player options (all in real time). That's *Age Of Empires* in a nutshell.

Publisher:
Microsoft (0345 002000)



X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE (95)

A revamped engine and a healthy helping of real-time combat have brought the fantastically addictive *X-COM* series bang up to date. If you like your strategy games deep and meaningful, you should buy *X-COM 3* immediately. It'll keep you busy for weeks.

Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)



SIMCITY 2000 (92)

A classic game that deserves its reputation as one of the all-time greats in the strategy world. Build and maintain the city of your dreams and cope with all the problems a real-life Mayor would come up against. It's a lot more fun than it sounds, trust us.

Publisher:
Maxis (0171 505 1500)



COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT (94)

...or C&C in SVGA with a few new units. It's a testament to the original's gameplay that the sequel can get away with adding few new features and still be fun to play.

Publisher:
Virgin (0171 368 2255)



CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 97/98 (90)

The best football management game ever gets its seasonal update and a few added extras – you can now play a number of leagues simultaneously, and change stats.

Publisher:
Eidos Interactive (0181 636 3000)



PUZZLE BOBBLE (94)

We can't agree exactly where *Puzzle Bobble* fits in *PC Zone Recommends*. Does it belong in here, with the *Civs* and *Sims* of the PC gaming world, or should it go in the action section? Who cares, as long as it's in...

Publisher:
GT Interactive (0171 258 3791)



CIVILIZATION 2 (90)

Explore the world, conquer territories and research new technologies in one of the most successful strategy games ever. It's not that different to the first one, but it merits a '90s update and a place here.

Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)

Flight Simulations



SU27 FLANKER (95)

For flight sim purists only. The graphics may be crap, but a great flight model and superb mission builder make it an essential buy for all prop-heads (just don't expect your best mate to be impressed).

Publisher:
Mindscape (01444 246333)



FLYING CORPS (92)

Action-packed WWI flight sim with neat graphics. You may recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WWI flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best PC WWI sim currently available.

Publisher:
Empire Interactive (0181 343 7337)



FLIGHT SIM '98 (94)

Another year, and yet another flight simulation from the mighty Microsoft. However, this time, with two new aircraft, a helicopter, hundreds of new airports and impressive 3D acceleration, it's really worth having.

Publisher:
Microsoft (0345 002000)



COMANCHE 3 (92)

This latest version is without a doubt the finest we've seen, sporting juicy terrain graphics due to a revamped VoxelSpace engine. Despite an accurate flight model, it still delivers intense gameplay, and is extremely good fun.

Publisher:
Novalogic (0171 405 1777)



F-22 ADF (93)

DID do it again with *F-22 Air Dominance Fighter*, an awesome new combat sim that leaves the competition firmly on the ground. Graphics and control to die for, it only really lacks a decent campaign. The *Total Air War* add-on pack will make it near perfect.

Publisher:
Ocean/DID (0161 832 6633)



JETFIGHTER III (91)

This is the follow-up to one of the most popular sims ever. Fly over three and a half million square miles of accurately-mapped terrain of South America. It really is just like being there. Oh yeah, you get to shoot things too, but sadly there's no duty free option.

Publisher:
Eidos Interactive (0181 636 3000)



Longbow 2 (92)

"*Longbow 2* is challenging, beautiful, exciting and fun – if you're 3Dfx'd up," we said in our review (issue 59). If you have no extra graphics hardware: think 'upgrade'. It'll be worth the investment.

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



A-10 CUBA! (90)

Functional graphics for a game that captures the imagination, mainly because the plane is a joy to fly. Slightly limited with the lack of a fully-fledged campaign but great fun, and pretty speedy on a modest Pentium.

Publisher:
Activision (01895 456700)



US MARINE FIGHTERS (92)

Lovely graphics and a realistic enough flight model. Originally released as a mission disk for *US Navy Fighters*, *Marine Fighters* now comes as part of the *US Navy Fighters Gold* pack, so go get that instead!

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



FLIGHT UNLIMITED II (84)

It can't really compete with the behemoth that is *Flight Sim 98*, and as a result is somewhat limited and claustrophobic. However, it does score highly for being more detailed in its smaller area, and much more fun.

Publisher:
Eidos Interactive (0181 636 3000)

SHIFT
LOCK

3D cards - a scam to make us poorer? Whatever happened to MS-DOS? And blimey, one reader even apologises. Jeremy Wells holds his face in his hands to stop his jaw falling open.



WORD PROCESSOR

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WHAT A CARD!

I bought the 1997 Xmas issue of your excellent magazine. I've been in the business of using computers for a while and have witnessed the leaps forward in technology, especially with computer games boasting dribblingly amazing 3D graphics, blah blah. Needless to say, games such as *Quake* and its promising sequel aren't gonna run on coffee and soggy cake... Yes, it's the 3Dfx shite I'm banging on about.

I don't mean to be rude, but I seem to have had my head stuck up my arse with this 3Dfx caper (not literally, but you get the picture). I recently bought a Toshiba 166MMX laptop with 32Mb of RAM etc. I thought: "Wahey! I can run the biggest, hungriest bastard 3D program in the world." Obviously I'm now left feeling very disillusioned.

My mouth fell open when I was reading about all these 3Dfx card tie-ups with games such as *Turok*. Am I eating cardboard or is this all some big scam to tie games up with certain models of 3D card and squeeze every last penny from our piggy banks? I mean, the market is going to go crazy with different

models of 3D card competing for games. All I can foresee (being a little melodramatic) is just complete and utter bloody confusion for the buyer.

I may have my facts wrong, but basically it looks to me as though big-seller 3D games in the near future are going to be snapped up by card manufacturers and used to promote their own hardware. If this does happen, will certain games only ever work with certain cards?

Wilson Stockman, Tiverton (in Devon where the sheep are a shade of red... from what I hear)

Choosing a 3D accelerator card isn't easy, but hopefully last month's round-up of cards helped. One thing's for sure - if you want to play the latest games, you're going to have to hand over some readies to Mr 3Dfx or Mr PowerVR. At the moment, most publishers are developing for 3Dfx and PowerVR, but more games appear to support 3Dfx only. If you have a PowerVR card in your machine then you should be able to run most accelerator-only games under D3D, but you won't get the extra special effects that your card can handle. As far as tie-ins with publishers are concerned, it is happening to some extent but, ultimately, the '3D accelerator revolution' will always be software-led. If, for some reason - okay, for money then - someone like id make *Quake III* or whatever PowerVR only, then half the world will buy a PowerVR card.

Microsoft are currently trying to establish an industry standard

(similar to Creative Labs' SoundBlaster) with Direct3D, but it seems that the only way a real industry standard will happen is if one of the two major card manufacturers goes bust or Microsoft decide to throw their weight behind one manufacturer at the expense of the other. You'll just have to wait and see - and in the meantime, you'll just have to pay your money and take your choice. Or splash out on both cards. That's what Ashley is going to do (see letter '3DFX and PowerVR' on page 118).

GIMME GAMES

I've only had a working PC for the past six months or so. Maybe I'm behind on coverdisc contents, but it does seem that they generally consist of game demos. This is all well and good

in helping us decide whether to buy a game or not, but once these demos have been tested there's no longer much use for the CD.

Is it possible that you could put some of those brilliant, old and hard-or-impossible-to-find games on the

coverdisc that many readers may have missed, such as *Monkey Island 1 and 2*, *Flashback*, *Alone In The Dark*, etc. The old 8-bit C64, Amstrad and Spectrum mags always did this and, having worked for one, I know that the cost of licensing games for coverdiscs is pretty minimal when the games are no longer in circulation.

I for one have been trying to get my hands on loads of the older titles that I played aeons ago, but is there any chance of finding them? NO!

I have always been into adventures and point-and-click games, which are sparse these days, and since completing *Doom*, *Duke Nukem*,



Processor power and RAM alone are no longer enough to run the latest games.



Tomb Raider and Quake (which only held my interest for a couple of weeks at the most), I'm now getting pretty sick of 3D games.

Russ Michaels, e-mail

We can't – or rather won't – put full games on the CD because Dennis

Publishing are involved in an agreement with ELSA that forbids such practice. The main reason for this is that it would turn into a mad demo war and the magazine would suffer. As far as we're concerned, the CD is important in that it allows readers to try software before they buy and often play the latest games before they're released. If you want old games, check out our regular budget section for those that come highly recommended.

I NEED SOME SUPPORT

Why is it that almost all hardware or software you buy these days tells you to get support via e-mail or from the website, when the publishers rarely provide support in this way?

I've contacted so many companies with regards to hardware not working properly, games not running correctly or whatever, and in most cases I've had no response at all. Occasionally, when I do get through, the response is along the lines of 'read the manual' or 'check the website', which I've obviously already done.

I think the major priority of any company should be to provide a quality customer service for the people who buy their products and keep them in business, instead of just taking the money and running. Unfortunately though, the advent of the Internet and websites only seems to have furnished the majority of publishing companies with a massive excuse not to provide adequate technical support.

The most recent excuse I've been given after harassing a company with calls and e-mails was that I should contact my supplier. What a cop-out! Do they really expect a shop assistant or mail-order company to give technical support on the products that they sell? Perhaps a *PC Zone* field test about the customer/technical support services of selected companies would help persuade them to buck up their ideas...

Here are the worst offenders I've found to date: Opti Inc, Eidos Interactive, LucasArts and Microsoft.

Snake, e-mail

Fear not – errrr, Mr Snake. We've got a man on it right now.



...And Westwood created C&C. And it's still going strong...

JUST TWO THINGS...

First of all, you keep on referring to C&C as "the game that started it all", but as far as I know *WarCraft* was out before C&C and is remarkably similar in theme.

Second, even when I upgraded to Windows 95 (at last), I continued to use Windows 3.11 for a long time. Your coverdiscs are containing less and less software that can be used in 3.11 or DOS without Windows 95. There's still plenty of shareware and stuff on the Net you could put on it. I don't suppose that all your readers have Windows 95 yet, so it might be a good idea to put some more stuff on it that they can still play.

Charles Collicutt, e-mail

Yeah, *WarCraft*. And *Dune*. And *Cannon Fodder*. As far as we're concerned, C&C was the game that spawned a zillion clones and "started it all". As for the CD, just about every demo we run is Windows 95 only, and with more and more games requiring a 3Dfx card, there isn't a lot of room left for DOS or Windows 3.11 stuff. If you don't run Win95, check out our back issues – there are plenty of old demos you should be able to run.

MISSING ISSUE

Right. I bought issue 57 (December 97) and issue 59 (January 98). So, er, what happened to issue 58? You know, the one (presumably) with reviews of *Sensible Soccer 2000*, *Virtual Pool 2* and *Grand Theft Auto*. The one that I'm guessing you called Xmas 97. Well happy sodding Christmas to your back issues department because I didn't see it. Or was this another cock-up "beyond your control"?

PS "Short novellas based on in-game screenshots." I think not.

Rob Meeks, e-mail

Ooh! Touchy! What's wrong? Didn't mummy and daddy buy you enough Christmas prezies? The Xmas 97 issue did/does exist and

Letter of the Month

IMPOSSIBLE STANDARDS

I came back to your mag just in time for Christmas and the goodbye *Quake* feature, and would like to say thanks for January's *Quake II* review which pointed out at least one of the bad points I'd noted. However, you overplayed the RAM requirements thing. Apart from 48Mb RAM, I have the recommended spec, and although there are delays, there's hardly any slowdown or jerkvision. To be fair though, tough luck. This was the first game I upgraded my machine for, and you were succinct enough to point out the only thing you can do when a games machine can no longer cut it is to upgrade.

But back to Ciaran Brennan's call for easier to install games. In the months that followed Windows 95's launch, the public cried out for just this. Well, two years on and most games are now Windows 95 programs. The effect? You could play *Worms* on a 386, and it worked under 95. *Worms 2* – which is essentially the same game with bells and whistles – now needs a P90 and above. All you have to remember is to keep DirectX from re-installing an older version and games are like any other programs out there. But now the public have what they want, it's time to upgrade your machine to play the same games with this added 'convenience'.

Around 99 per cent of the problems with games I've seen in my work at a computer shop are from new users who don't want to pay 30 quid for the latest games that work, but instead buy the ten-quid re-releases with their old crap manuals and no extra help to get them working under 95. I agree with Ciaran: the PC will never have the cartridge guarantee, but the backlash in the specialist press from a fiasco like *Frontier: First Encounters* means quality is as guaranteed as it can be – what real punishment would this association mete out for a company that regularly releases non-standard-meeting software?

Kenneth Henry, e-mail

Wise words there, mate. Thanks for sharing them with us – and we're really impressed that you didn't even try and plug your shop.

If your letter is selected as 'Letter of the Month' we'll send you a bundle of T-shirts and maybe even a game. COO!

you were a fool to miss it. Not only did it have an extra *Quake* CD with 500 levels and 30 TCs, but we also ran EXCLUSIVE demos of the brilliant *Age Of Empires*, *Overboard!* and *GTA*. Maybe you should subscribe to avoid further disappointment.

AN APOLOGY

Hi again! I feel I must make an apology. Back in issue 58 you printed a letter I'd written in which I criticised *Quake II* for its bright colours.

I've now actually played the game (courtesy of Santa on Christmas



Public apology number one – Dave Peacock regrets slagging off *Quake II* in his previous letter to *PC Zone*. Phew, what a relief for everyone involved!

Day), and in short, I'm still dribbling. It's fantastic! The overall feel of the game is much more atmospheric than *Quake* ever was, the baddies' AI is amazing, and the weapons have been perfectly levelled out, making deathmatch very competitive.

I'm fortunate enough to have a ninja-bastard Pentium II – I won't go into the specs, but trust me, it's ultra cool and *Quake II* runs very well on it. The only problem is that I've got a 4Mb STB Velocity, with nVIDIA's Riva 128 chipset. The card's great, but nVIDIA have yet to complete the GL driver for '95, it's only out under NT – bastards! The sites I've visited offer the pre-pre-pre-release version, saying that the full version will be out in the fourth quarter of '97. Well, it's now '98. Hurry up nVIDIA!

Sorry about slagging off nVIDIA, but if they see themselves looking bad in the best publication in the universe, they might finish the job!

Dave Peacock, e-mail

QUAKE II

I bought *Quake II* a week ago and it's the best game I've ever played. It looks brilliant on my 3Dfx card, but why have iD deprived us of co-operative play and playing the game over a modem? Will they correct this on the data CD that's coming out soon?

James Provan, Aberdeen

ALL BY MYSELF

I am writing this letter after spending eight frustrating hours trying to play *Quake II* over the Internet. The main problem stems from the fact that it was designed primarily as a single-player game, which left the multi-player side playing second fiddle. My gripes are as follows:

1. There's no one-to-one modem capability. Is this game the first not to offer this?

2. The version shipped is completely incompatible with the one required to play on any of the Internet servers.

3. The patch to upgrade to the version is not advertised at all on either Activision's or iD's website.

All in all, the release of *Quake II* is a farce. It was released too early to cash in on Christmas and as such the multi-player capability of every version shipped is completely useless unless you're prepared to spend hours trawling the Net for patches and updates. And if you think I'm the only one who has a gripe, just check out the Activision site on AOL – there are more than 400 complaints, yet not one of them has been answered. Will there ever be a day when a game is ready to play on the Net straight from the box?

Mark Hilton, e-mail

We've played *Quake II* using *Wireplay*, and we've obviously got a network in the office that we use for multi-player sessions, and Macca has actually managed to play over the Internet. That said, iD always maintained that *Quake II* would focus more on the single player (due in part to the criticisms levelled at *Quake*).

If you scan the Net you'll see that there are already loads of multi-player levels and *Quake* upgrades that should more than satisfy your hunger for some decent multi-player action. As yet we don't know exactly what the official iD upgrade will contain, but we can only presume that iD are keen to make amends. Guess you can't please everybody all of the time.

THE PERFECT GIRLFRIEND

I would like to propose a new computer game that, surprisingly enough, has never been thought of: the virtual girlfriend. Similar in structure to *Catz* and *Dogz*, you need only play with her when you want to. There are bad-tempered ones, nice ones, Lara Croft lookalikes and even some that take off all their clothes at the touch of a button, so you can bet any money that no two girlfriends are the same. You can choose eye and hair colour and other 'features'. She doesn't mind if you bring the lads round to gaze at her flabby tits. Even better, she doesn't nag or hog your computer. Beats *Barbie Fashion Designer* any day.

Jim Hudson, e-mail

But you don't get out and about that much, do you?

CENSORSHIP SUCKS

I from South Africa. I just thought I'd write in and gloat about how we don't have to worry about any censorship in games here, especially *Carmageddon*, and how even one of our most mainstream newspapers, the *Sunday Times*, gave it a recommendation.

That aside, I think that all these problems stem from computer games becoming too big. I mean, now that they're thought of as 'mainstream' – at least in the UK, Europe and USA – the press and everybody else have now become interested. This leads to

unfortunate cases where people who shouldn't be poking around in the industry are causing trouble for all those concerned.

Well, at least for you guys.

Also, I'd just like to say that I think *PC*

Zone is fab, and that *Quake II* and *Grand Theft Auto* are really good. Cheers.

Eugene Zak, South Africa

It's a bit of a double-edged sword really, isn't it? It's good that games are becoming more popular and that more people are enjoying them, but at the same time it's sad that certain factions within the media are portraying certain games as the root of society's ills. All we can hope is that given time, people will understand that games are actually harmless entertainment, just like horror movies, and that just because people choose to 'virtually' shoot monsters in a game or watch a movie about a serial killer doesn't mean they're a danger to society.

WHAT'S AVERAGE?

The following quote comes from your review of *Rebel Moon Rising* (issue 59, January 98): "[The PC games market] can't afford to simply churn out archaic, overused clones like *Rebel Moon Rising*, because they're just no good." The final score for the game was 49%. Might I suggest that 49%, which is the same as five out of ten, should apply to a game which is 'average'? A reasonable summary for something which gets half-marks

would be 'of interest to some, but there's better available'. A summary of your review would be 'crap'. This is a problem which seems to affect all computer game magazines – the scores are all high. It's rare that you see a game get less than 50% (although *PC Zone* is pretty good in this regard), even if it's bad.

The marking system you use is generally pretty good (I especially like the 'In Perspective' box – it's an excellent idea). But isn't it about time that the final scores were consistent with the quality of the game? Most mags seem to regard 70% as an average, whereas logic suggests that 50% should be average.

Of course, if 50% were average, some Microsoft games would end up with negative scores...

Andy Patrick, Bath

In our book (okay, mag) seven out of ten is average, which means that 70% is average, as we say in the 'Reviews Intro' section. Any game that scores less will, in our humble opinion, offer limited appeal. Some people...



3DFX AND POWERVR

Just a swift note to ask if it's possible to connect a 3Dfx card and a PowerVR card in the same system. I've got a Graftixstar600 Pro and a PowerVR card (and bloody good it is too), but there are some damn fine games out there that only use the 3Dfx card – I was wondering if anyone has managed to get both running?

Ashley, e-mail



The distinctly unaverage *Rebel Moon Rising*, which scored a whopping 49% in the January issue of *PC Zone*.



Lara's still got a way to go to get to the treasure in the secret room. Thanks for telling us about it, Dylan – and for not letting on how to get to it.

Yes, it's perfectly possible to have both a PowerVR and 3Dfx card running side by side in the same machine. In most cases they'll both run fine, but to prevent any potential conflicts between them, you'll need a utility called 3DCC (have a look on this month's coverdisc) which sits at the bottom-right of your Windows task bar. Click on this and you can set your primary and secondary devices. This is particularly useful when you want to determine which of the cards is providing acceleration for games that use Direct3D only. In our experience, 3Dfx is best at D3D, so you should switch to that for D3D games.

GET INTO LARA'S BEDROOM

Have you found the secret room under the stairs in Lara's house in *Tomb Raider II*? It contains loads of treasure from *TR1*. There's a switch in the maze in the garden of the house, but the door's on a timer, so hurry. If you get annoyed by the shit-face of a butler, do what I do: lock him in the cellar.

Dylan Bullock, e-mail

Thanks for the tip, Dylan. You'll be old too one day you know.

ALWAYS READ THE LABEL

Oh look! That magazine has great reviews, previews, hints and other stuff! I've got to buy it! And look, it has a *Tomb Raider II* demo as well! Lucky me!

Imagine my surprise when I clicked the *Tomb Raider II* icon for the first time on the browser, and a message

appeared saying that *Tomb Raider II* had expired. How can this be corrected? Is it the fault of the CD or someone else's?

Fizzy, e-mail

It's actually Core's fault – they sent us a demo that timed out just after we had compiled and checked the CD, and before the mag went on sale. Follow the instructions on the bag, call the hotline number or send the CD to us and we'll swap it for a fully working demo. Sorry.

DOOM AND GLOOM

After skimming through the results of your Best Games of 1997 poll, I couldn't help noticing that many of the games that were nominated still adhere to the dark and pessimistic 'it's the end of the world' doom-and-gloom theme.

I must admit that most of the games in my collection do fall into that category, but sometimes I get a strong urge for a good old-fashioned laugh. *Sam And Max Hit The Road* and *Toonstruck* did it for me, but now I'm hungry for more.

Really funny games, unfortunately, seem to be very hard to get hold of, so I would appreciate it if you guys (and girls, now) could publish a Best Laughs Ever List. Thanks.

Ivan Lietaert, Belgium

It would be a bit of a short list, wouldn't it? By their very nature, games tend to be based on war, fighting and saving the world, but there's often a lot of humour tucked away in them too. For instance, it's actually possible to bump into Sam the Rabbit in LucasArts' *Jedi Knight* if you look hard enough.

GO RAM IT UP YOUR ARSE!

I've been away from the PC games world for nearly a year. However, about a month ago, I returned and was


shocked to discover that my beloved MS-DOS is now completely defunct and that every bloody thing runs in Windows 95.

Things then seemed to get even worse. Now I find I need 32Mb of RAM and a 3D card. In despair, I bought a M3D Matrox card and an extra 16Mb – but why should I have to do that? Yes, the graphics are great, which is reason enough to buy a 3D card, but why do I then have to buy an extra 16Mb to get the damn thing to work when 99 per cent of reviews and game manufacturers still state a 16Mb requirement and show shots of the 3D accelerated version running on an über-machine with 64Mb of RAM? Well, it's just NOT GOOD ENOUGH!

Would it be too much to ask for manufacturers and reviews to give an honest account of what hardware is actually needed?

Michael Nurney, e-mail

In our experience, most games will run with 16Mb of RAM, but you will need at least 32Mb if you don't want to experience some kind of serious slowdown. *Quake II* runs fine on our office P133 with 16Mb and a 3Dfx card, once you've walked round a level and loaded in the textures.

Admittedly, it's not ideal, but if you want to play the latest games, you're gonna have to splash out on the latest kit. 



Sam the Rabbit sneaks into *Jedi Knight*. Who said there wasn't any humour in games anymore?

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So the games of yore are really crap, right? **Paul Presley** begs to differ... and he's already got a plan.

Those were the days



HE '80S. WHAT A DECADE. I REMEMBER IT well. Duran Duran king of the charts. Designer stubble and *Miami Vice*. Shiny suits with the sleeves rolled up. Margaret Thatcher. Yes, there were a lot of good things in those bygone days, but nothing could surpass the sheer abundance of that greatest industry buzzword – playability.

Playability, playability, playability. You couldn't move for the stuff. Computer games were packed to the gills with it. Boxes sat on shops' shelves emblazoned with stickers that declared, "Free with this game – extra added playability!" Games programmers were hailed from the rooftops by socially under-developed schoolchildren everywhere for bringing a hint of enjoyment to their otherwise lonely and inadequate lives. Games were so chock-full of playability that magazines would actually reduce their scores for having too much. "I'm marking this score down," they would say, "it's got far too much playability."

Or at least that was the popular theory six months ago. Thanks to the advent of Spectrum and Commodore 64 emulators, we now realise that most of the so-called 'classic' games were actually a bit crap. We didn't know we were living under a cloud of false nostalgia. We've downloaded the necessary files from that popular global network of computers (Handy Hint: I like to call it 'the Internet', feel free to use the term yourselves, kids) and discovered that games like *Knight Lore*, *Ghostbusters*, and *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* are little more than a waste of good hard drive space.

Well I have one word for you, and it ends with 'ocks'. And if that's not

enough I have three other words to go with it – 'great', 'big' and 'hairly'. Eight-bit games were brilliant. They were some of the finest pieces of game design I've ever had the pleasure of witnessing – and believe me, I know. I've been there since the beginning. The main reason was that in those days, back in the 'steam age' of computing, programmers had extraordinarily small amounts of memory to work with. These people were used to having little more than 650K. And that's 'K', not 'Mb'. Most of them even hailed from the 'Fit It Into 16K' school, back when the rubber-keyed Spectrum reigned supreme and Sir Clive Sinclair wasn't yet seen as a buffoon who couldn't even get a bike design to work properly.

As a consequence, these people couldn't afford to faff around with trivial items like graphics or sound. You had 16K to work with, and 15K of that was splurged on making the game work. And this is precisely why today's gamers reckon yesterday's games are so bad. The modern gamer has become so spoiled with the magic of 3Dfx and the miracle of SoundBlaster (and compatibles) that they simply cannot get used to playing something that looks so dated. As a result, the game is dismissed out of hand and nostalgia can take a running jump. The fault doesn't lie with these



The all-new *Sentinel Returns*, now updated for the '90s gamer.

"We now realise that most of the so-called 'classic' games were shit."

misguided souls though, it's just that modern-day corporations and their idiotic marketing men who believe 'Snickers' is a more purchase-friendly name than 'Marathon' have polluted our nation's cultural and intellectual esteem to the extent that we've now become a populace of slack-jawed yokels, eager to pay ludicrous sums of money for our next five-minute slice of instant gratification.

Anyway, where was I? Oh yes. The point is that by today's standards, their presentation sucks the big one, but the games themselves (or most of them, anyway) still rock, man. I long for something like *Minder*, *System 15000* or *The Fourth Protocol* to elevate me once again to the peaks of enjoyment. So here's my plan. Are you paying attention, software industry? Good. Find the programmers of the really 'classic' games. Think back to those titles that you, Mr Managing Director or Mrs Head Of Development, still look back on with

such fondness. Buy the licensing rights. Remake the games, but with today's presentation values. Hollywood does it all the time with films for god's sake, so don't tell me the same thing can't be achieved in the games industry. (I mean, what was *Barb Wire* if not *Casablanca* with tits and guns?)

And don't just stop at remakes of *Tomb Raider* or *Quake* or *Brain Damaged Fighters 4* either. Go back to the guys who knew what they were doing, to the games that really made a difference. Psygnosis and Activision have already kick-started the trend with their respective *Sentinel Returns* and *BattleZone*, but it simply isn't enough. Hunt Matthew Smith down and wave large sackfuls of cash at him until he agrees to give us the truly deranged (but truly brilliant) *Jet Set Willy* in a new adventure for the '90s. Give me 3Dfx *Deathchase*. Playability is a constant, it doesn't fade. Just give it a chance to compete again. 2



The fab *BattleZone*. It was good then (above left), but will Activision do it justice?



LOOKING

BACK



The post Christmas flatulence has now dissipated into the ether, and people here at *PC Zone* are starting to feel alive again. Except for **Paul Mallinson**, that is.



USUALLY FEEL PRETTY DREADFUL THE BEST of days, but recently I feel (and look) like I've been dragged through a hedge backwards. I put this down to a couple of things. Firstly: an unnaturally high degree of social intercourse (we've just seen off the new year don't forget), and secondly: *Final Fantasy VII*. Yes, I know it's not a PC game (although it soon will be – see preview on page 46), but it is a brilliant, brilliant game. *FFVII* is incredibly well put together, and is absolutely huge with it. Lack of sleep is killing me. Not that you should worry – I'm as hard as nails and have even had the time to spend playing *Jedi Knight* during the breaks...

Charlie Brooker is another Zoner who's currently lacking in the sleep department. Why? Well, it's because he's been playing Interplay's forthcoming *Fallout* "in preparation for the forthcoming apocalypse...". Not only is *Fallout* "unexpectedly good",



No sleep for the wicked now that *Final Fantasy's* on the way.


many times you can shit through the eye of a needle'. On his return, though, he edited himself into the Arsenal side in *CM2* and spent an inordinate amount of time vying for a place in the England team. He reckons it's the "way ahead" for bored *CM2* fans looking to get even more from this highly-rated management sim.

Chris Anderson is still – yes *still* – playing *Age Of Empires*.

He's finally got to grips with the hardest difficulty setting and is now ready to prove his worth against the real world: "If anyone wants to take me on in Wireplay, I'll kick their arse," he told me. Prospective challengers should e-mail no more than fifty words to editorial.pczone@dennis.co.uk explaining why they deserve the chance to take him on.

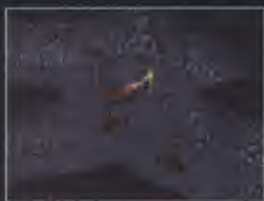
Major common ground has been found in the *PC Zone* HQ now that *QII* deathmatch has taken off big-time. Christmas proved disruptive for deathmatching (the office network being, like, in the office) but the introduction of new PCs has transformed Bolsover Street into an orgy of virtual destruction once more. Richie's been playing it lots ("until my eyes bled"), as has Chris, though he reckons *Jedi's* better (which I agree). Jezza loves the new *Quake II* 'taunts' but reckons Rich has some way to go before he's up to scratch ("He's *Quake*-lexic – must be genetic").

I'm in there too – especially in light of the new *Armagon* DM conversion with added bungie ropes, as is Macca – a man who will not relent in the 'I'm better than you' stakes.

The only outcast in the *PC Zone Quake II* family is Steve Hill, who's been replaying shareware *Doom* on an old 486 "until his eyes fell out" – although not literally – that would be hideous. Mind you, some would say that'd be a marked improvement... 

"You may laugh now, but if you multiply 666 by three you get 1998. It's gonna happen this year..."

Chris is still playing *Age Of Empires*, while Charlie's been losing sleep with *Fallout*.



which Charlie shared with us in a fit of cheery neurosis (*Is there such a thing?* – Ed), but it will, apparently, prepare him for survival when the cloud eventually comes. "I've picked up loads of good tips, and have been playing a lot of *Quake II* to improve my combat technique as well." He's a funny feller is that Charlie Brooker. "You may laugh now," he maintains, "but if you multiply 666 by three you get 1998. It's gonna happen this year..."

'Archmage' Presley's outlook has been far more social and optimistic than Charlie's. He discovered multi-player *Myth* a while ago and is still having fun blowing up his friends with cunningly-placed satchel bombs. DID's incredible *F-22 Air Dominance Fighter* is still going strong on the Presley playlist as well, mainly thanks to its excellent tutorial system. "It's nowhere near as difficult to play as many people assume," Mr Presley attests.

Jeremy spent most of Christmas drinking Red Label Absolut vodka while at the same time tanning his lily-white arse on a lovely beach in Tenerife. The lucky bastard. He played no games at all (rumours of laptop *CM2*/sangria sessions being somewhat unfounded), apart from that time-old classic 'see how



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S I E R R A

Minimum system requirements: Windows 95, Pentium 133, 16MB
RAM, SVGA card, 4x CD ROM Drive, Windows compatible soundcard.

For further information contact: Cendant Software UK, 2 Beacontree Plaza, Gillette Way, Reading, Berkshire RG2 0BS
Tel: 0118 920 9111